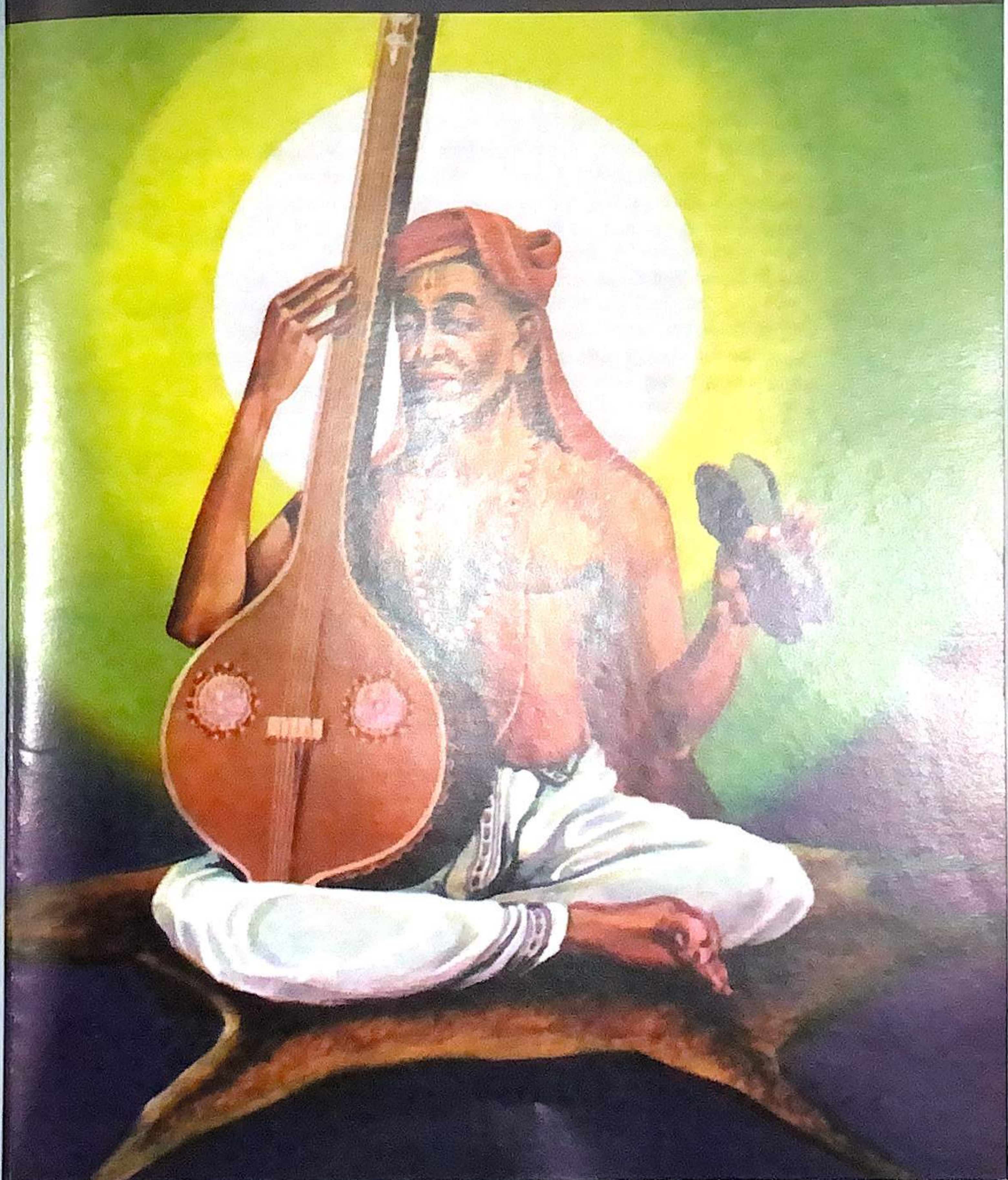
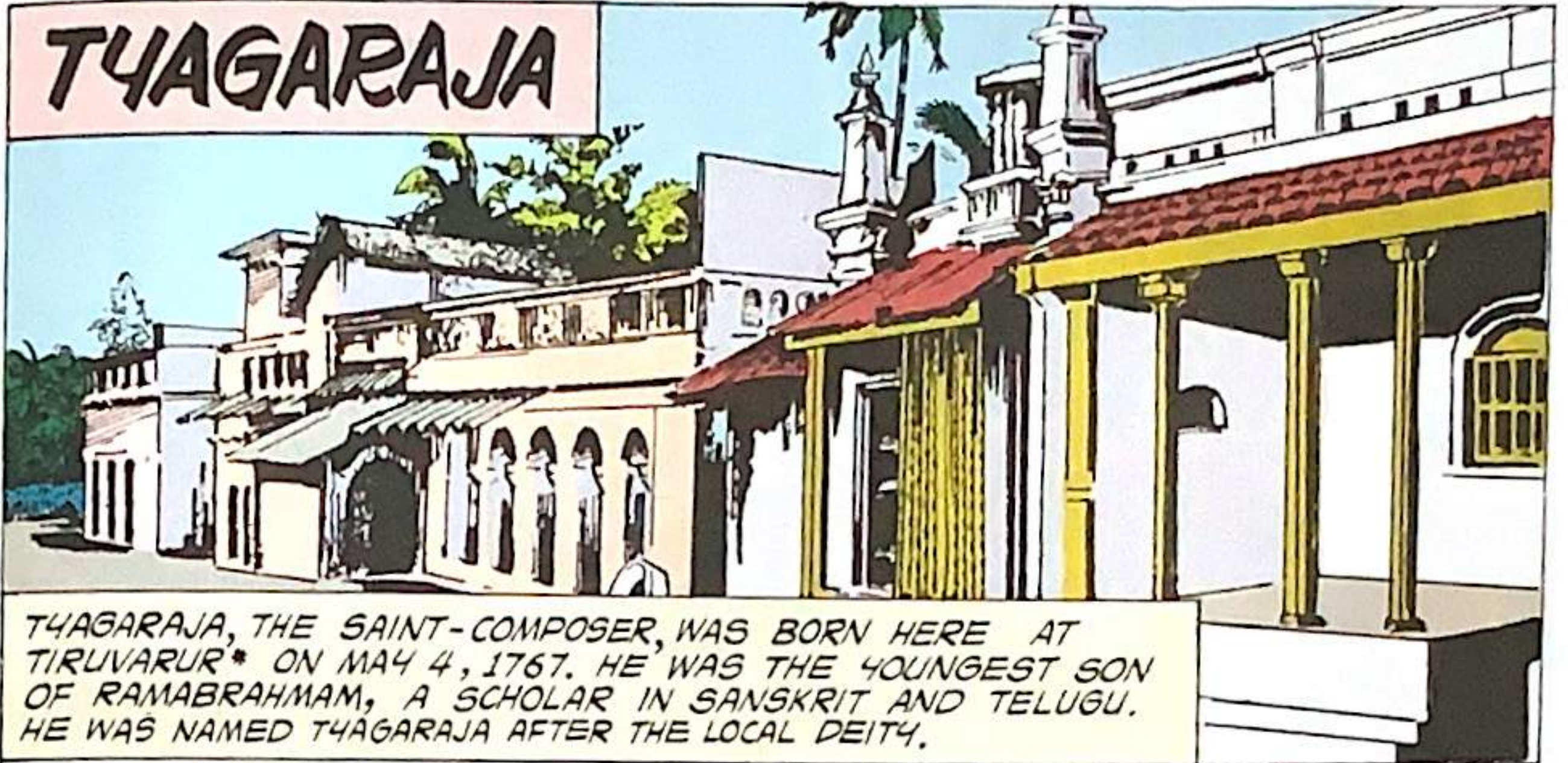


TYAGARAJA

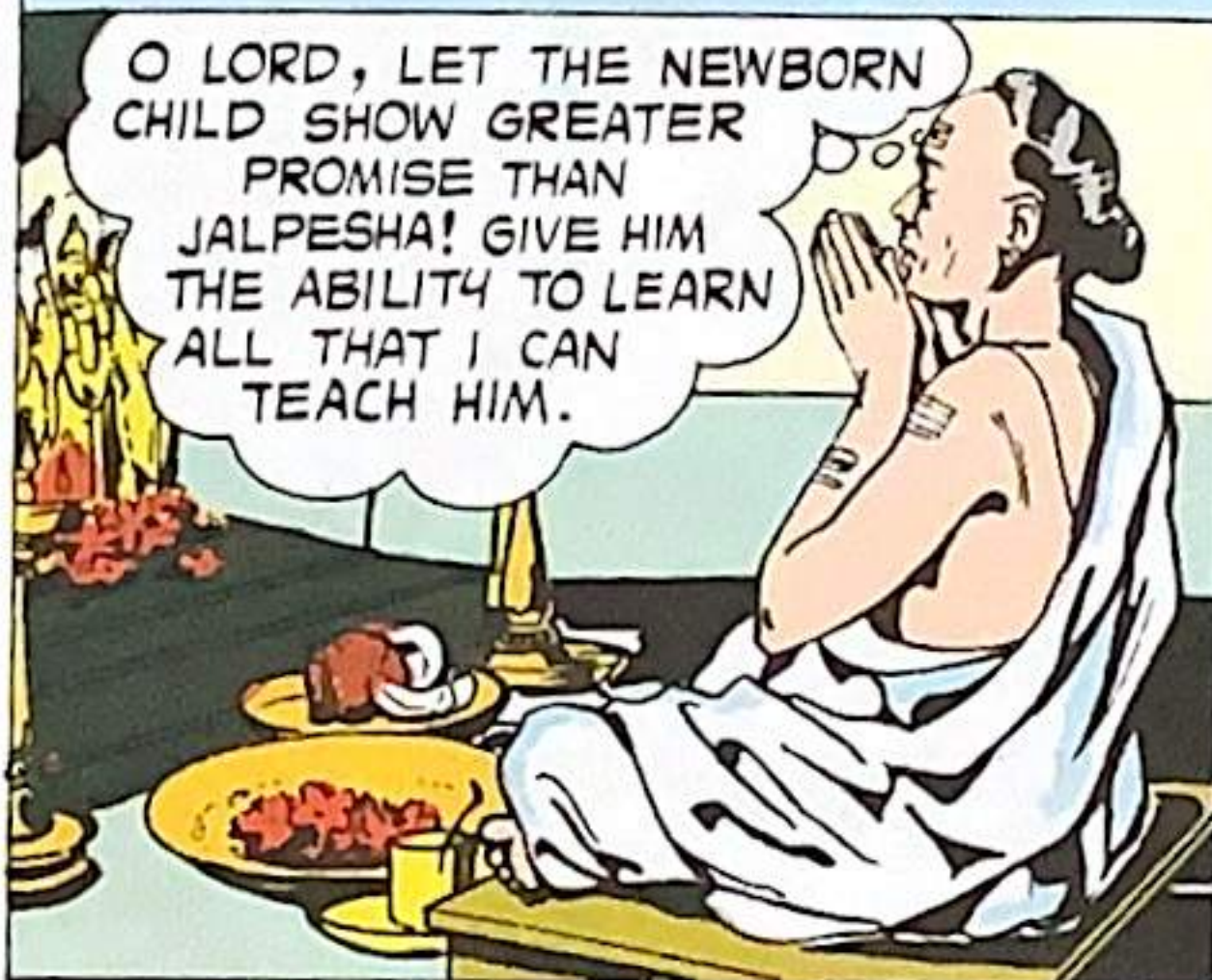
POET-SAINT AND SOCIAL ACTIVIST



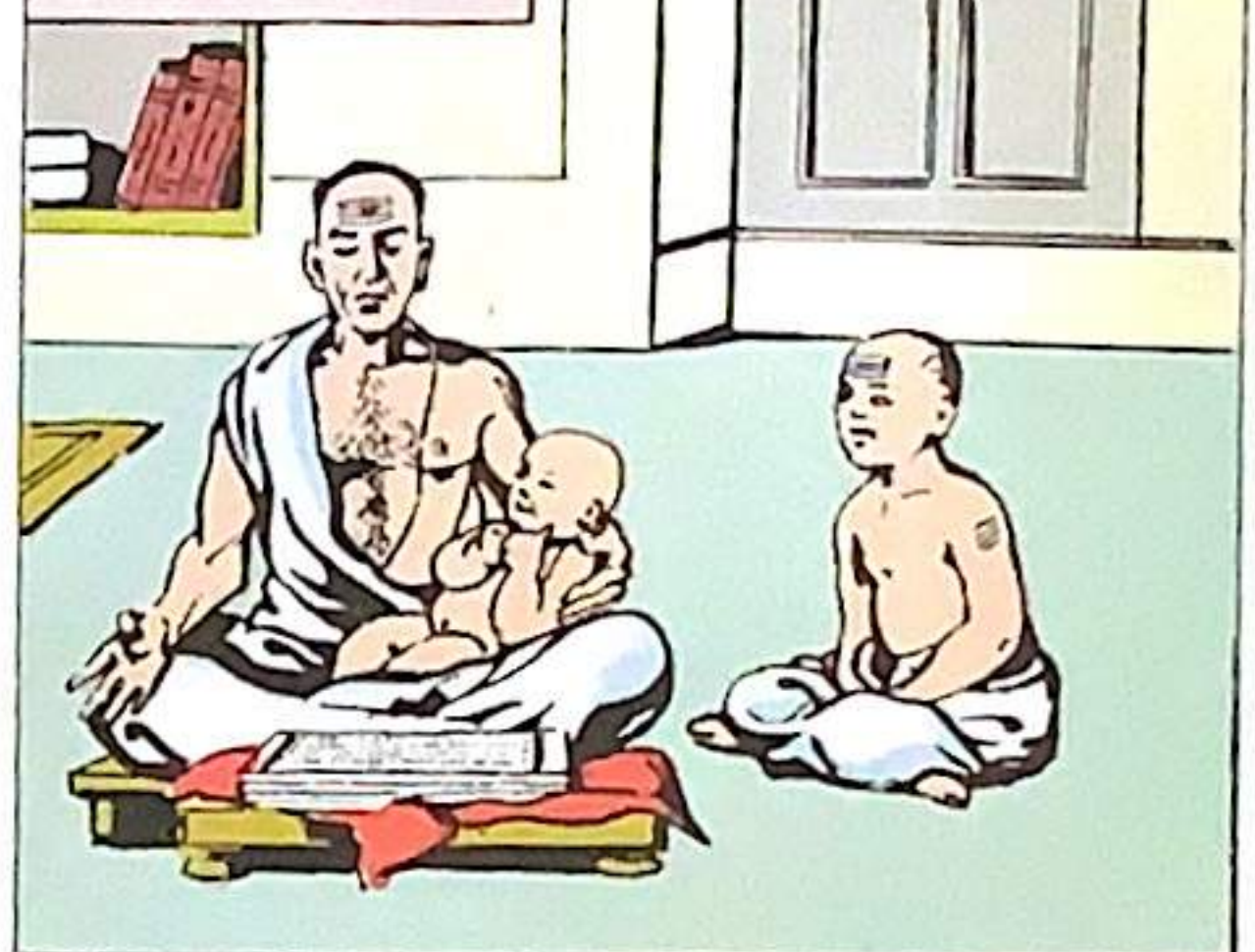
TYAGARAJA



RAMABRAHMAM AND HIS WIFE SEETAMMA WERE STAUNCH DEVOTEES OF RAMA.



EVERY EVENING RAMABRAHMAM WOULD READ VERSES FROM THE RAMAYANA...

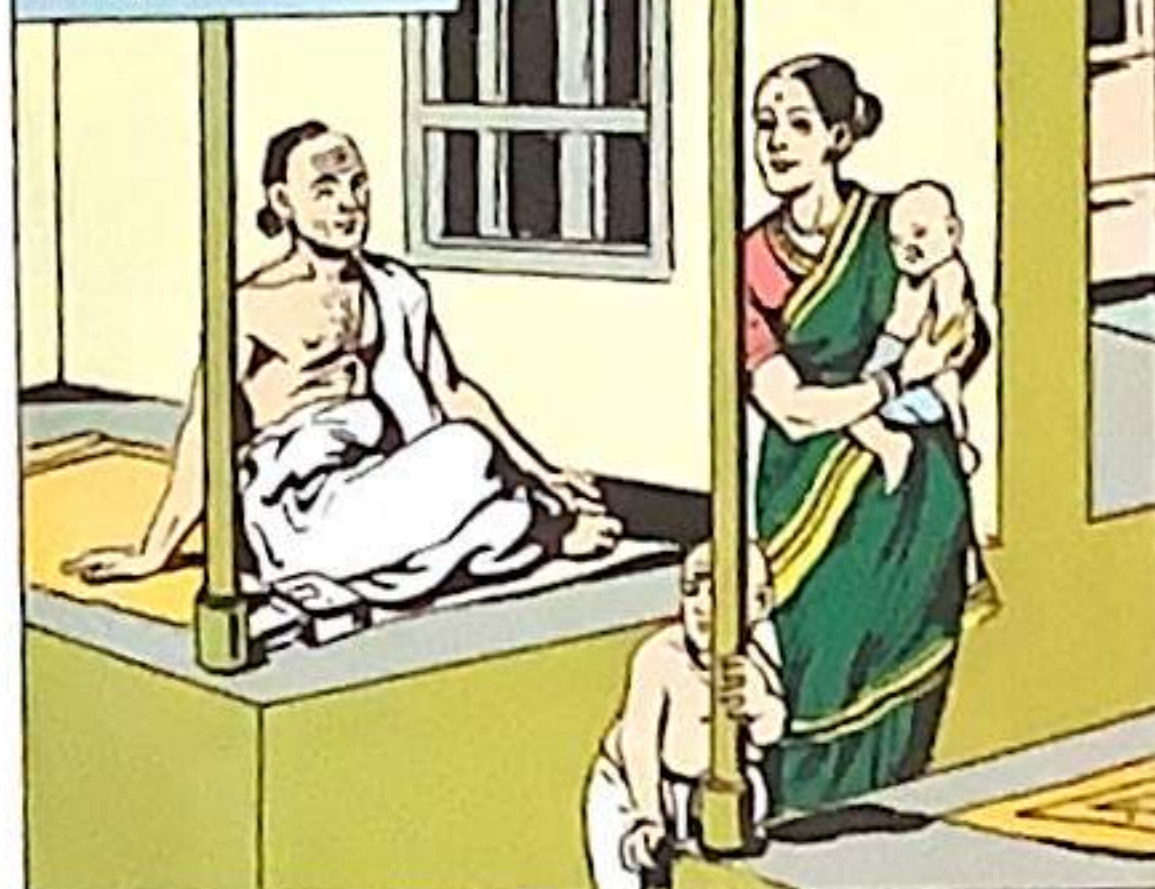


...AND LATER SEETAMMA WOULD SING SACRED SONGS.

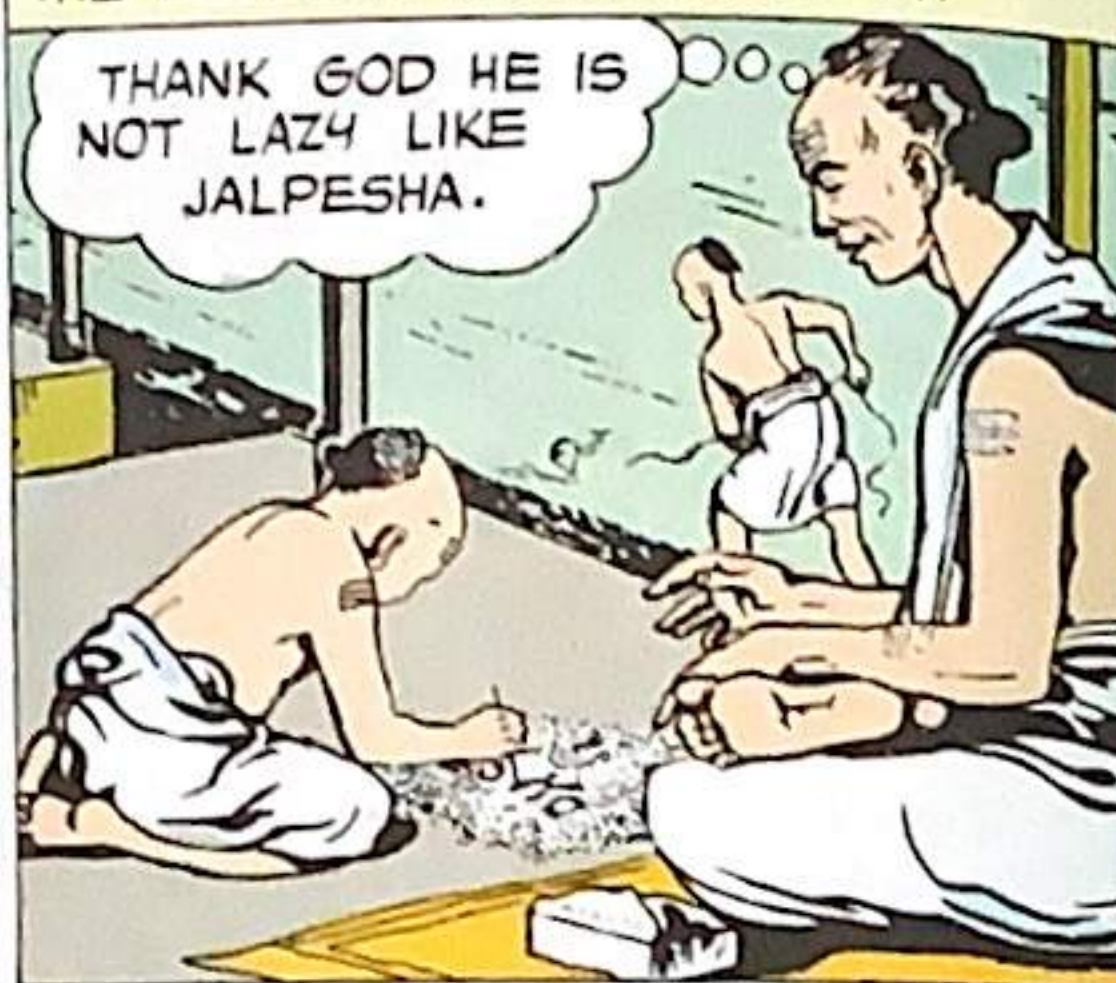


* A TOWN IN TAMIL NADU

A FEW YEARS LATER AT THE INVITATION OF RAJA TULAJAJI III, RAMABRAHMAM SETTLED DOWN AT THE VILLAGE OF THIRUVAIYARU.*



RAMABRAHMAM HIMSELF TAUGHT TYAGARAJA TELUGU AND SANSKRIT. THE LESSONS BEGAN AT DAWN.



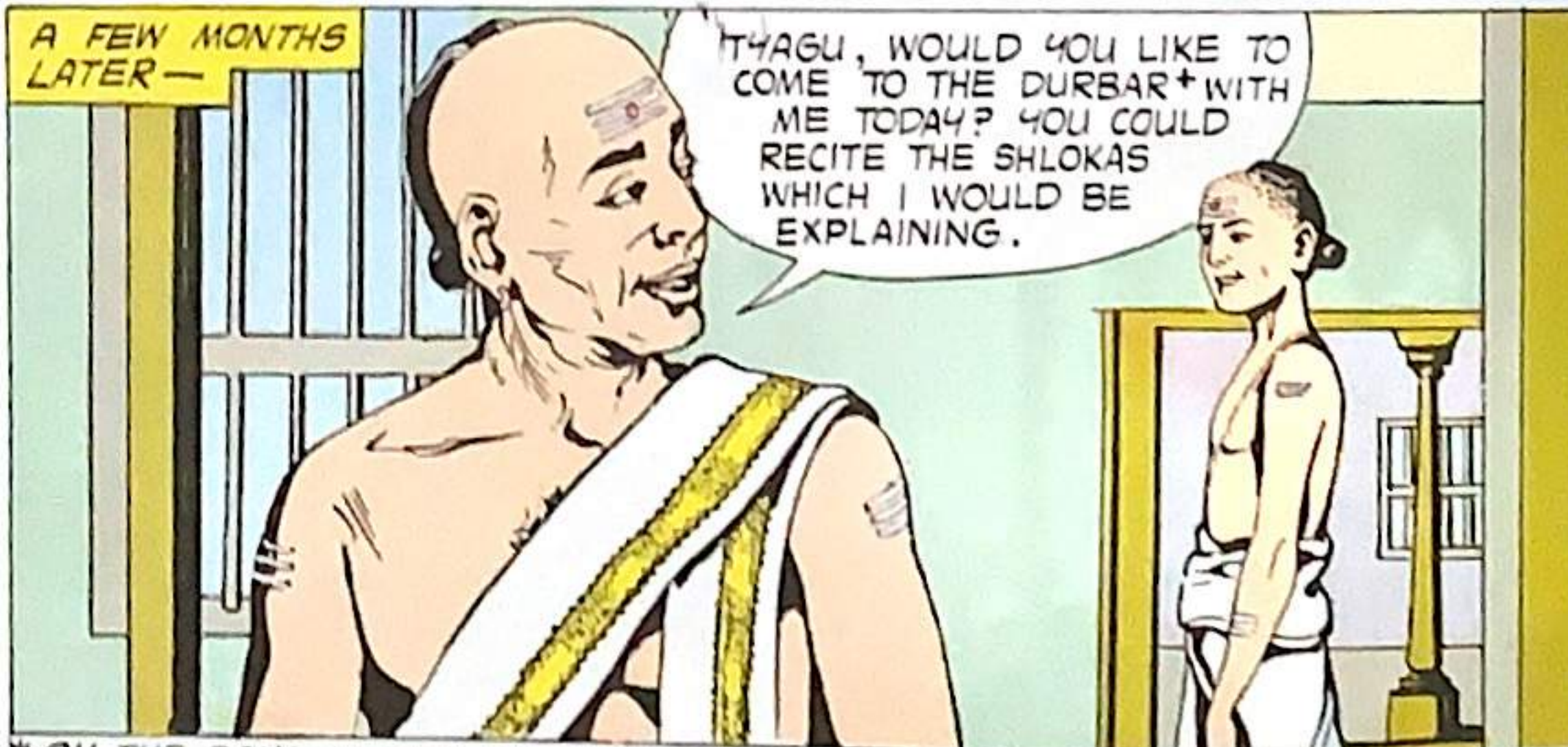
THANK GOD HE IS NOT LAZY LIKE JALPESHA.

WHEN THE LESSONS PROGRESSED TO LEARNING AND RECITING SHLOKAS FROM THE RAMAYANA—



HIS MEMORY! HIS DICTION! AMAZING! HE WILL SOON BE ABLE TO HELP ME IN MY DISCOURSES.

A FEW MONTHS LATER—



TYAGU, WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME TO THE DURBAR† WITH ME TODAY? YOU COULD RECITE THE SHLOKAS WHICH I WOULD BE EXPLAINING.

* ON THE BANK OF THE KAVERI † COURT 2

THAT EVENING AS TYAGARAJA RECITED THE SHLOKAS—



AHA! LISTEN! THAT BOY WILL BE A GOOD SINGER SOME DAY!

SUCH A CLEAR VOICE! AND SUCH PURITY OF DICTION! A MARVEL INDEED!

AT HOME TYAGARAJA HAD BEGUN SINGING WITH HIS MOTHER.



LAMBODARA... LAKUMIKARA...

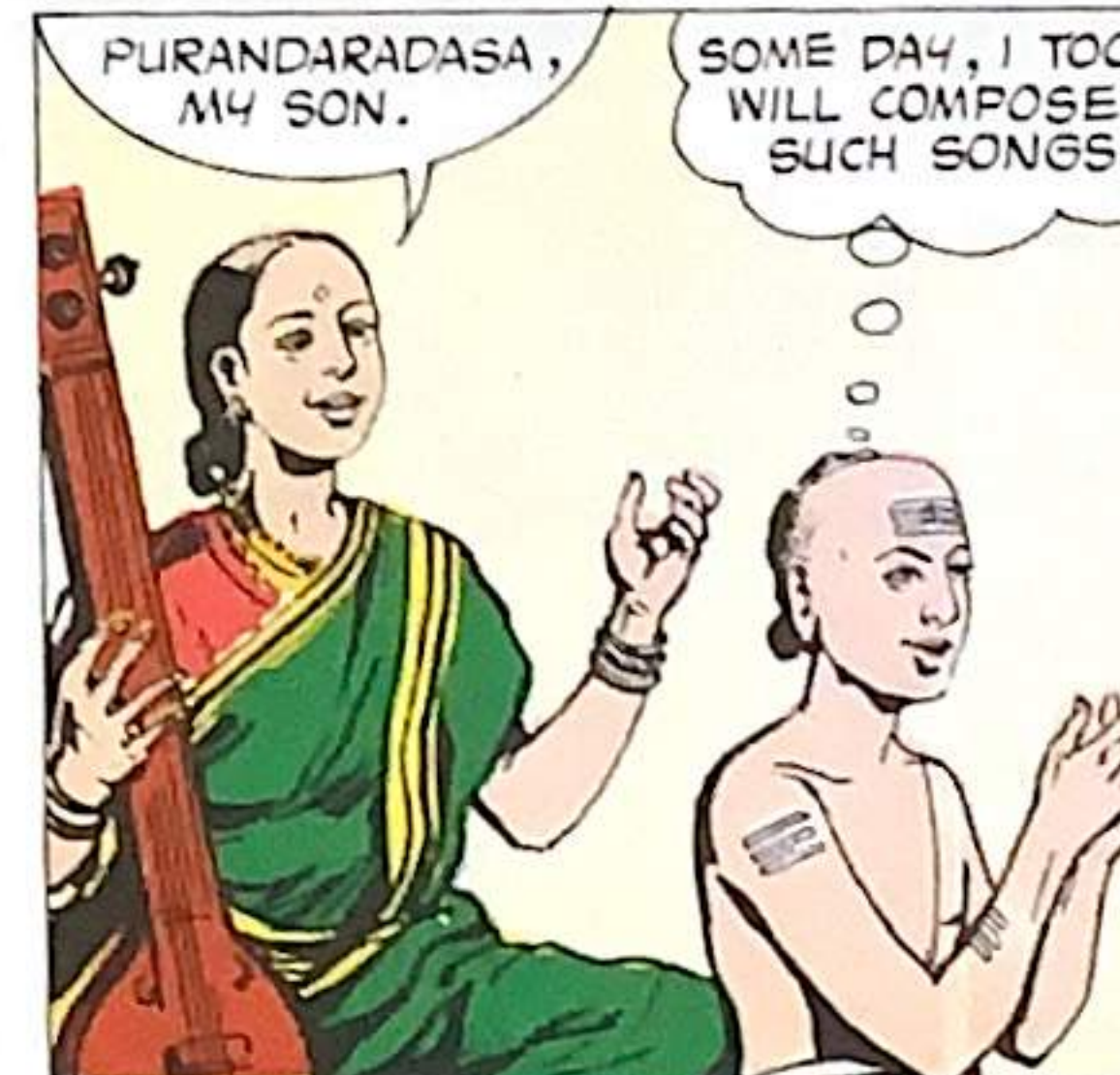
SEETAMMA THRILLED TO THE SOULFUL SINGING OF HER SON.



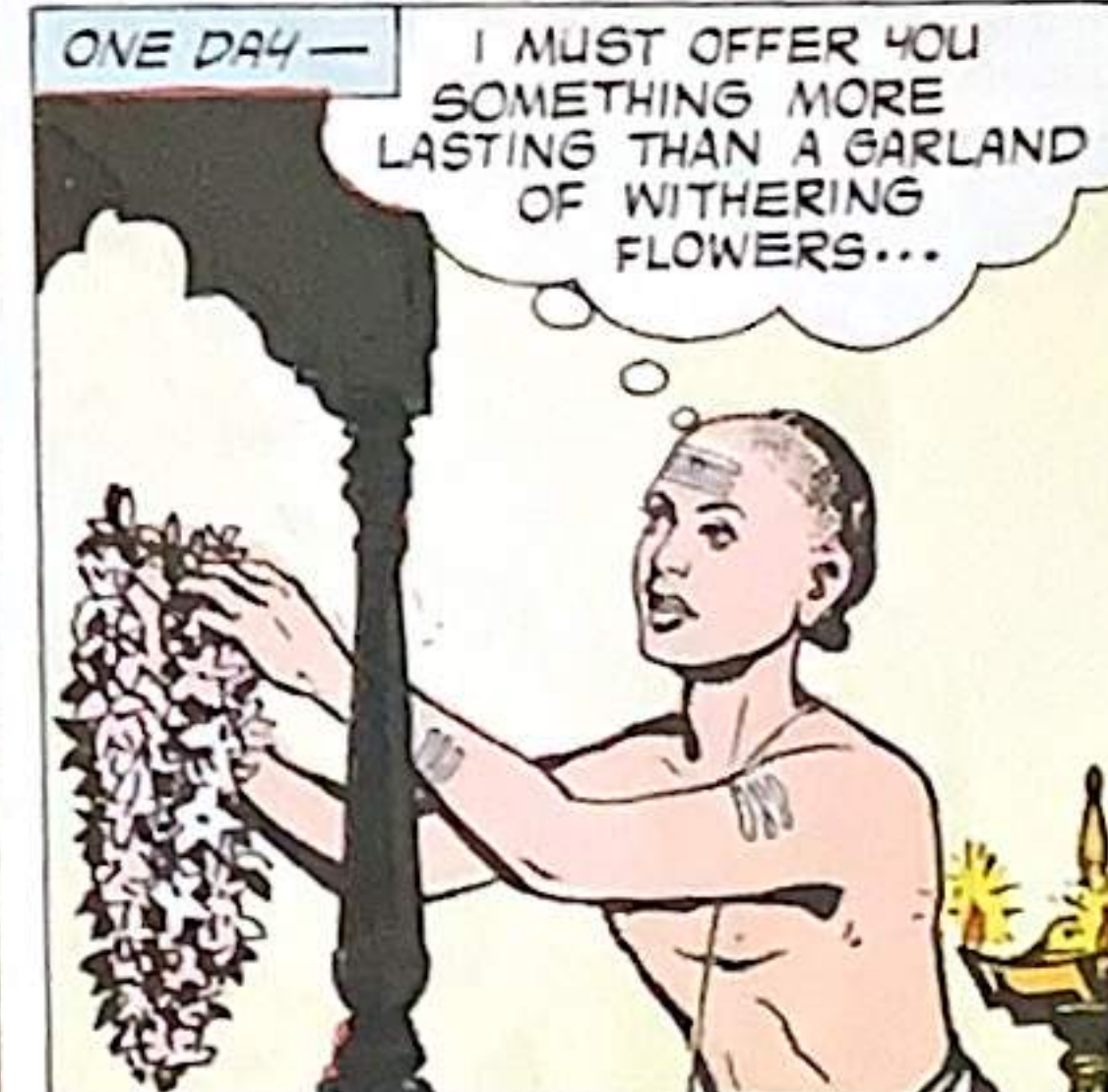
THAT WAS WELL SUNG, TYAGU.

WHO COMPOSED THAT SONG?

PURANDARADASA, MY SON.

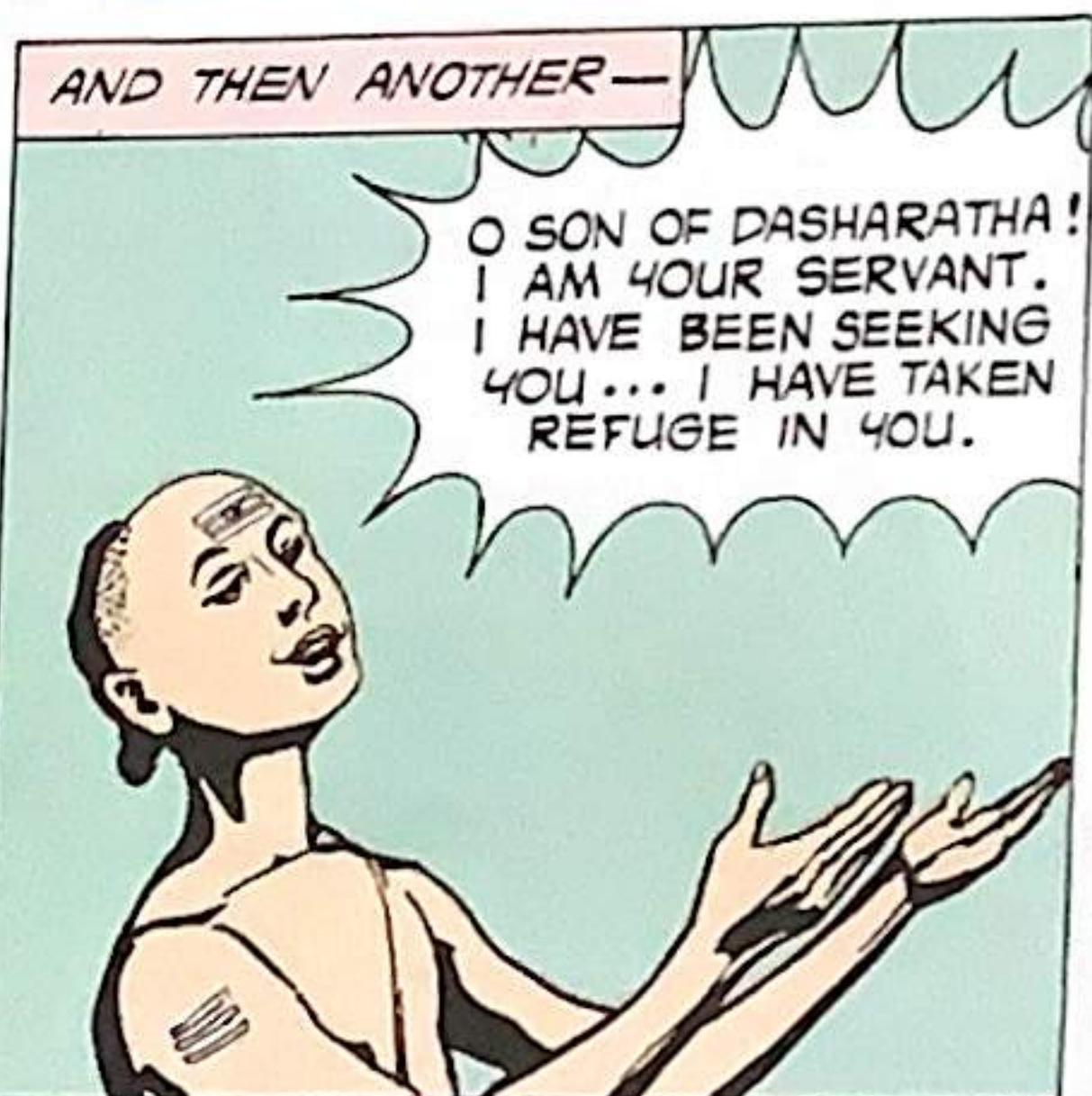
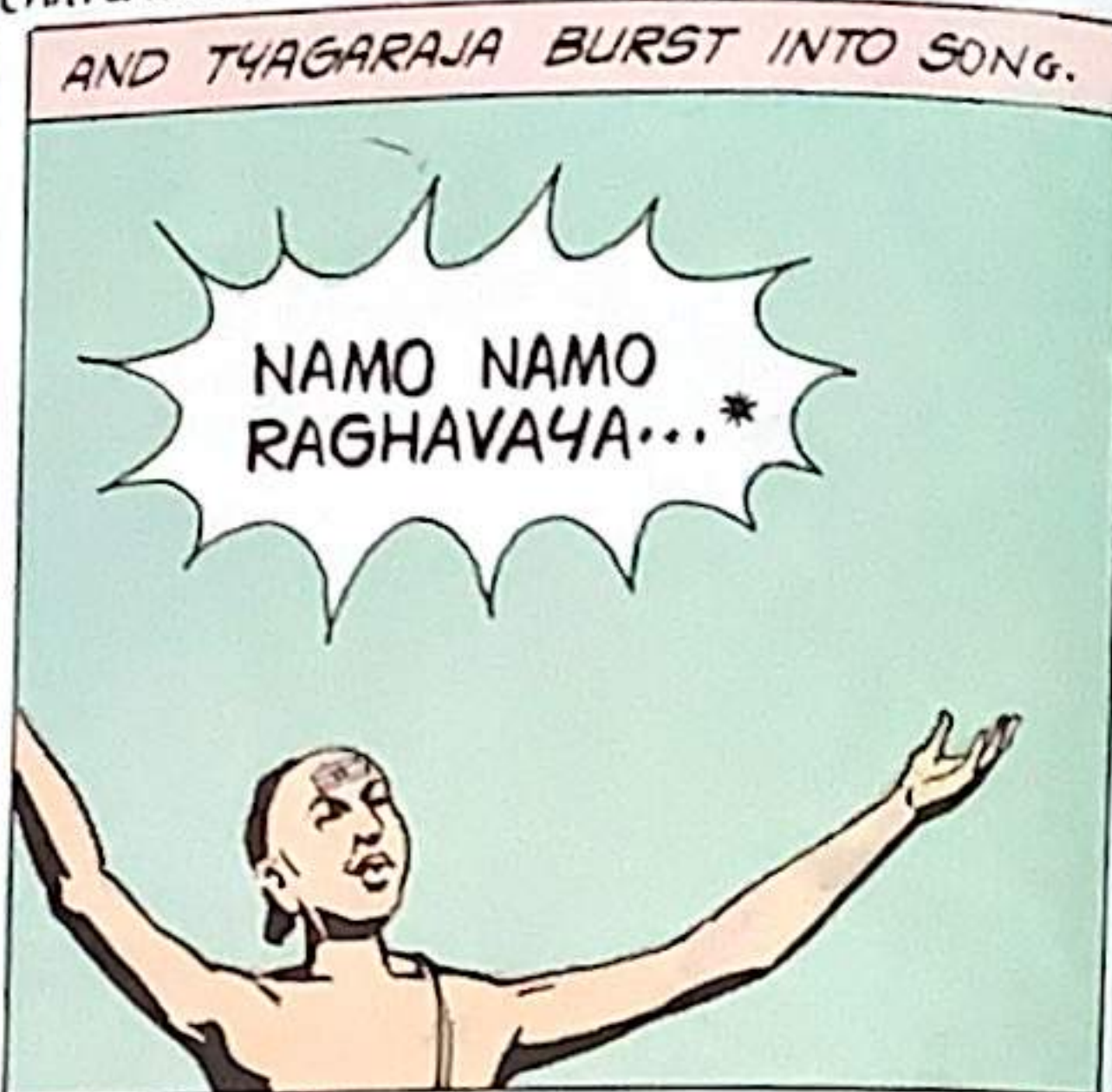


SOME DAY, I TOO WILL COMPOSE SUCH SONGS.

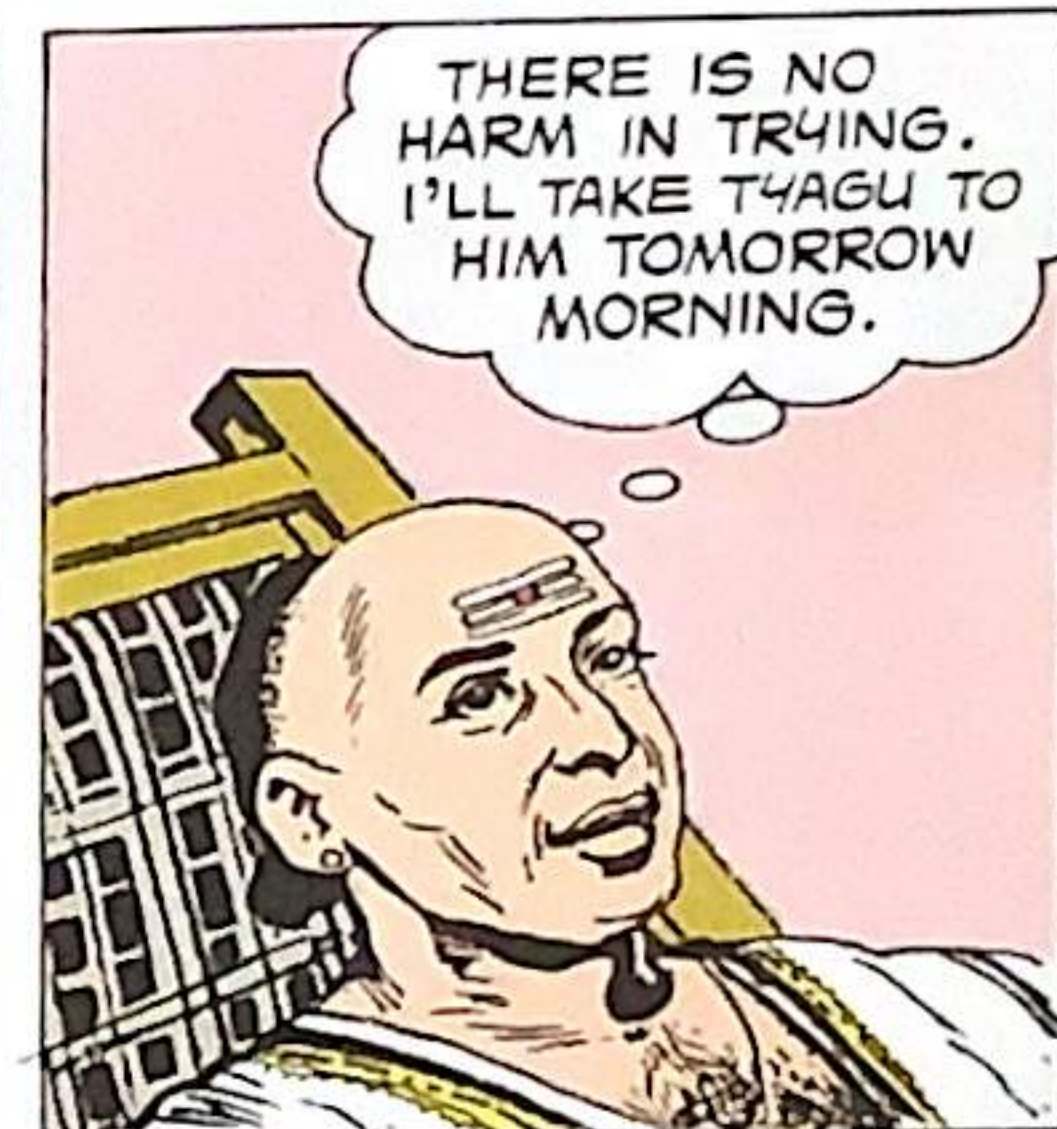
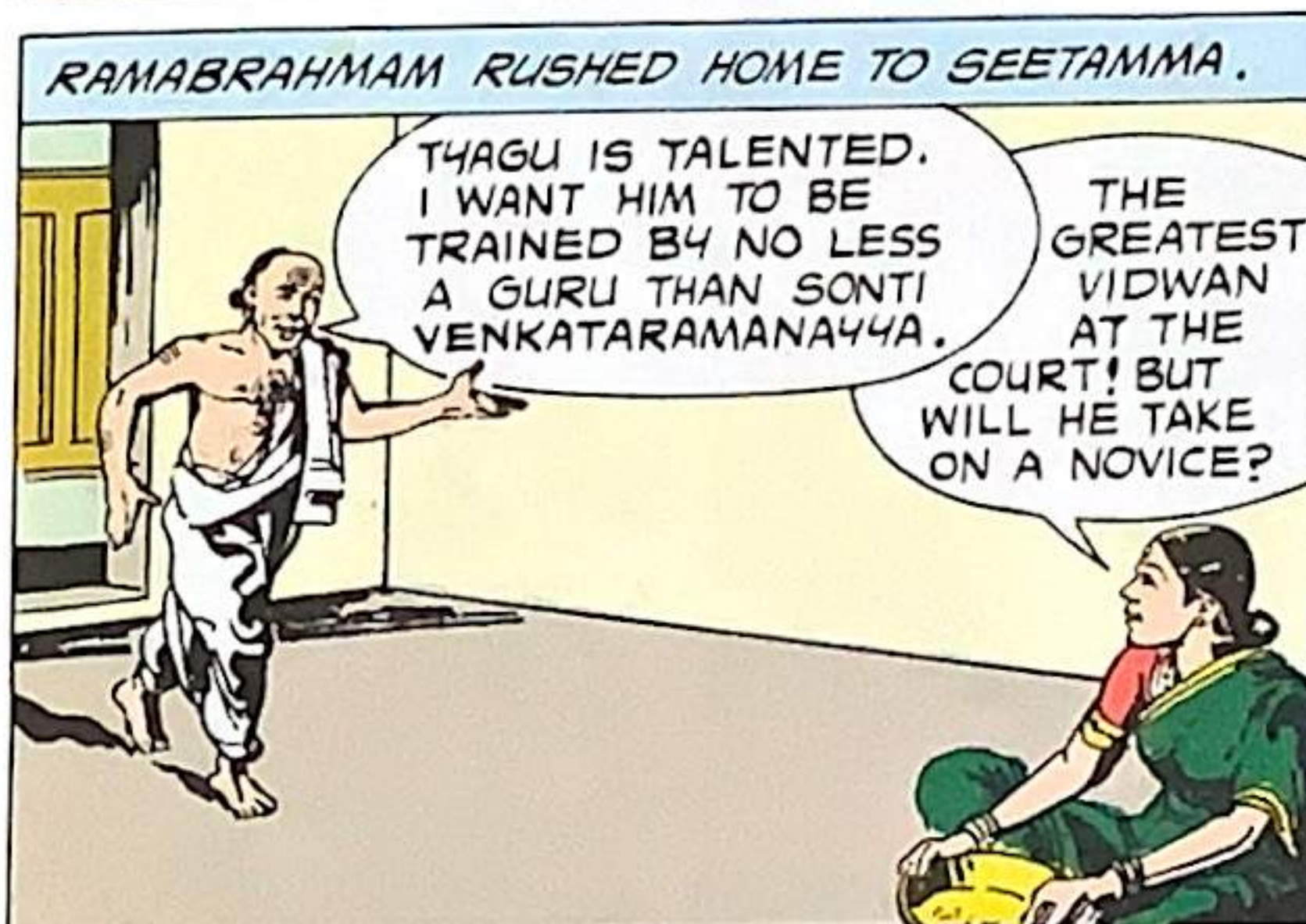
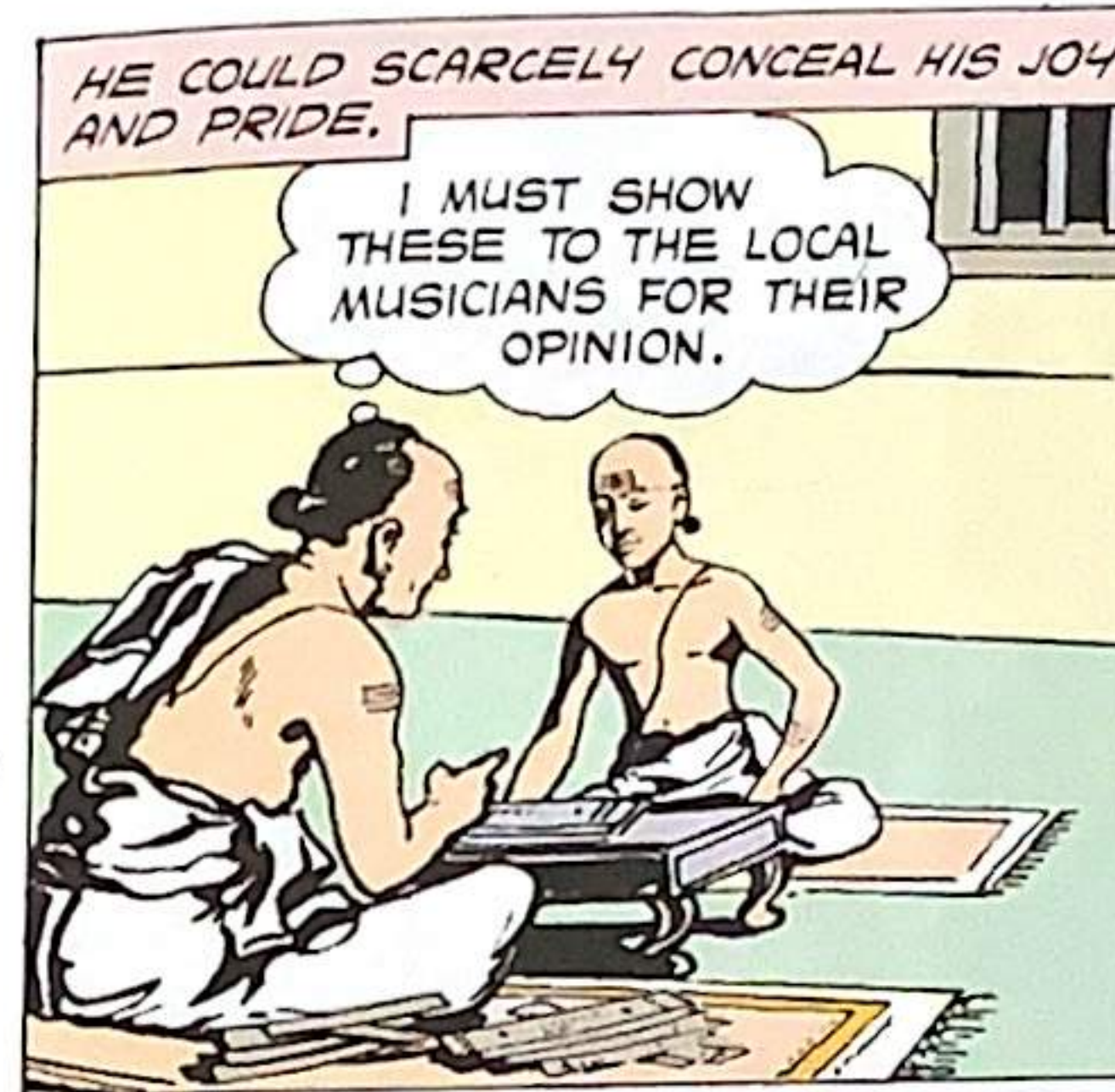


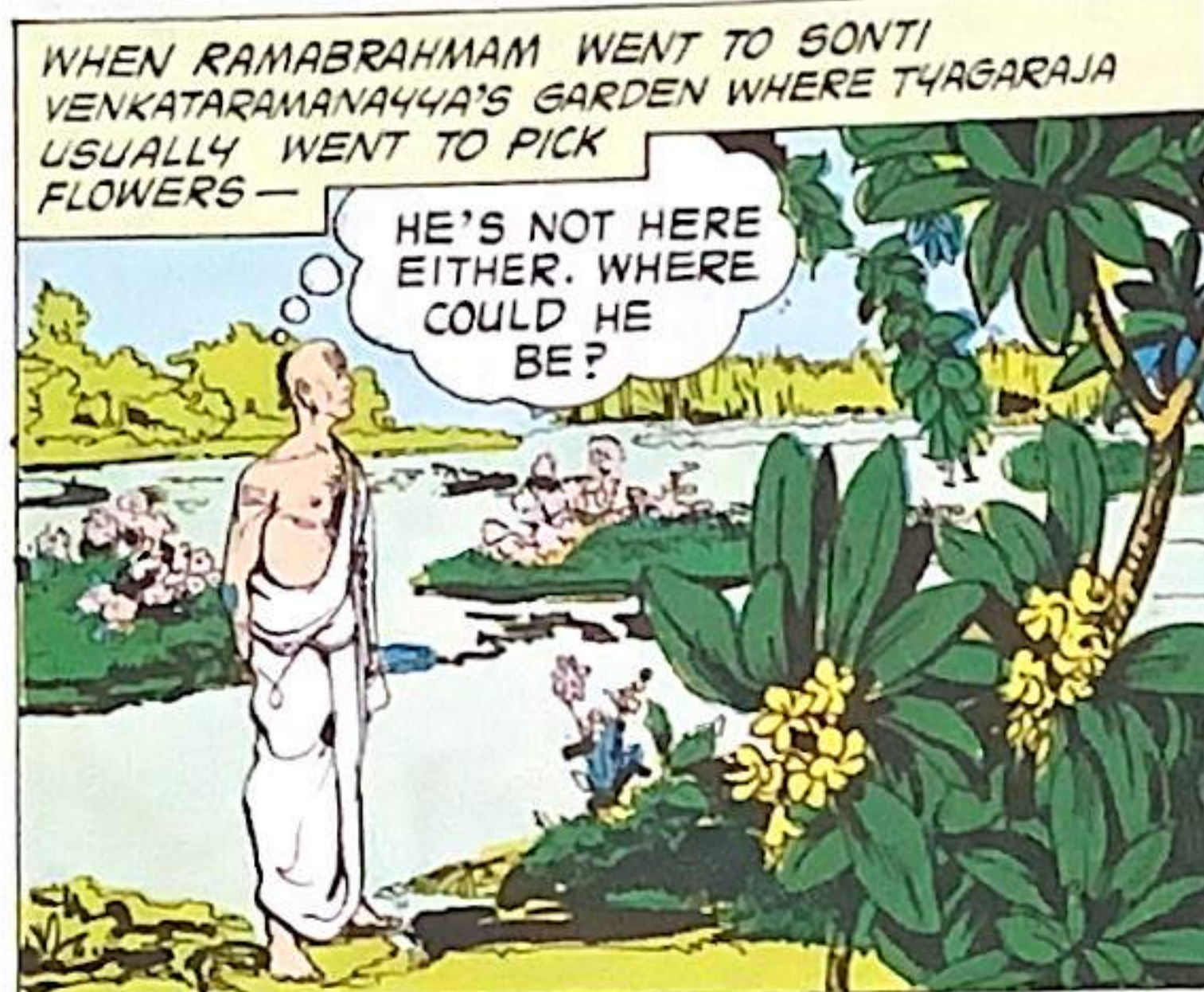
ONE DAY—

I MUST OFFER YOU SOMETHING MORE LASTING THAN A GARLAND OF WITHERING FLOWERS...



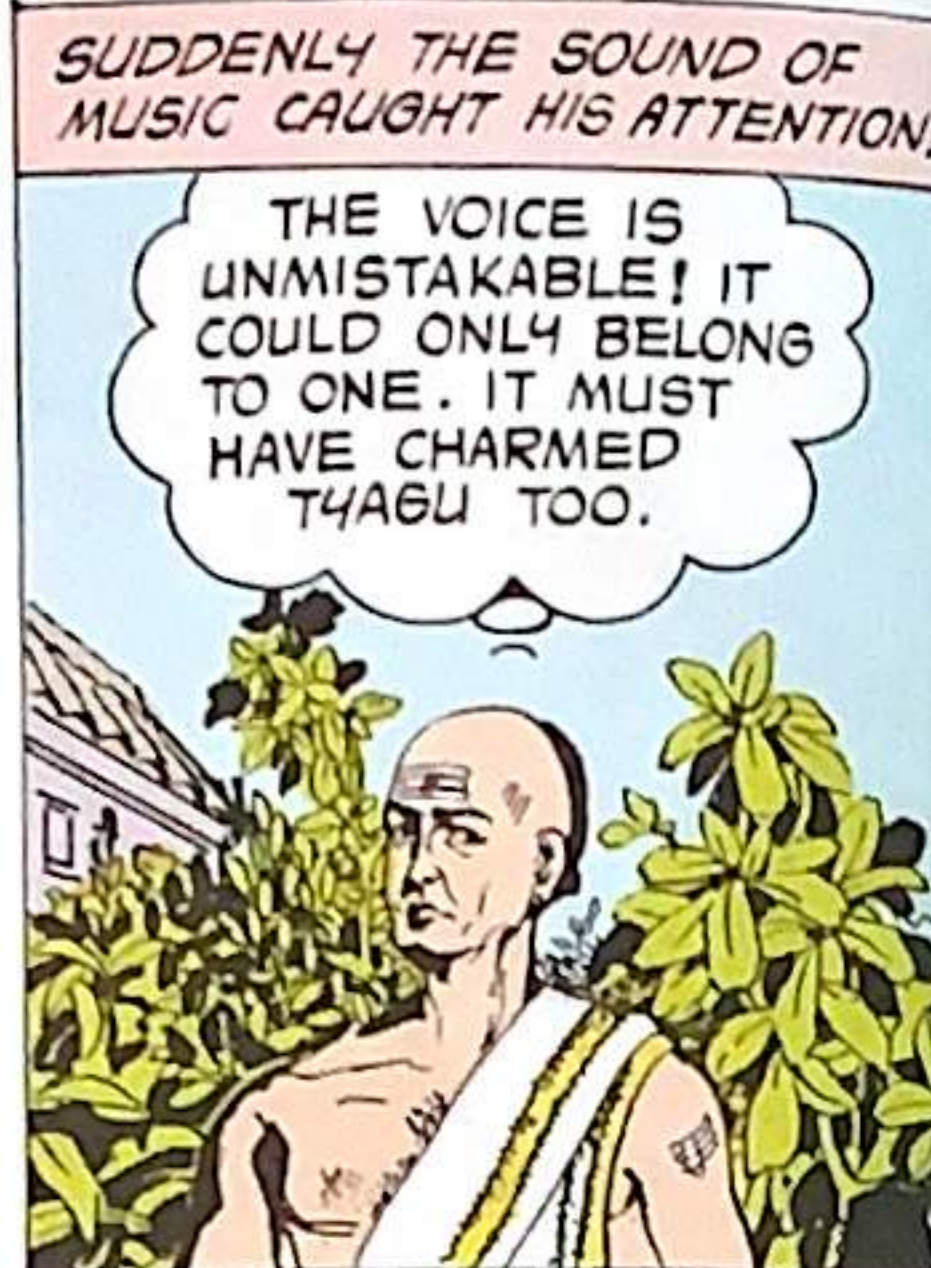
* SAID TO BE HIS EARLIEST COMPOSITION





WHEN RAMABRAHMAM WENT TO SONTI VENKATARAMANAYYA'S GARDEN WHERE TYAGARAJA USUALLY WENT TO PICK FLOWERS —

HE'S NOT HERE EITHER. WHERE COULD HE BE?



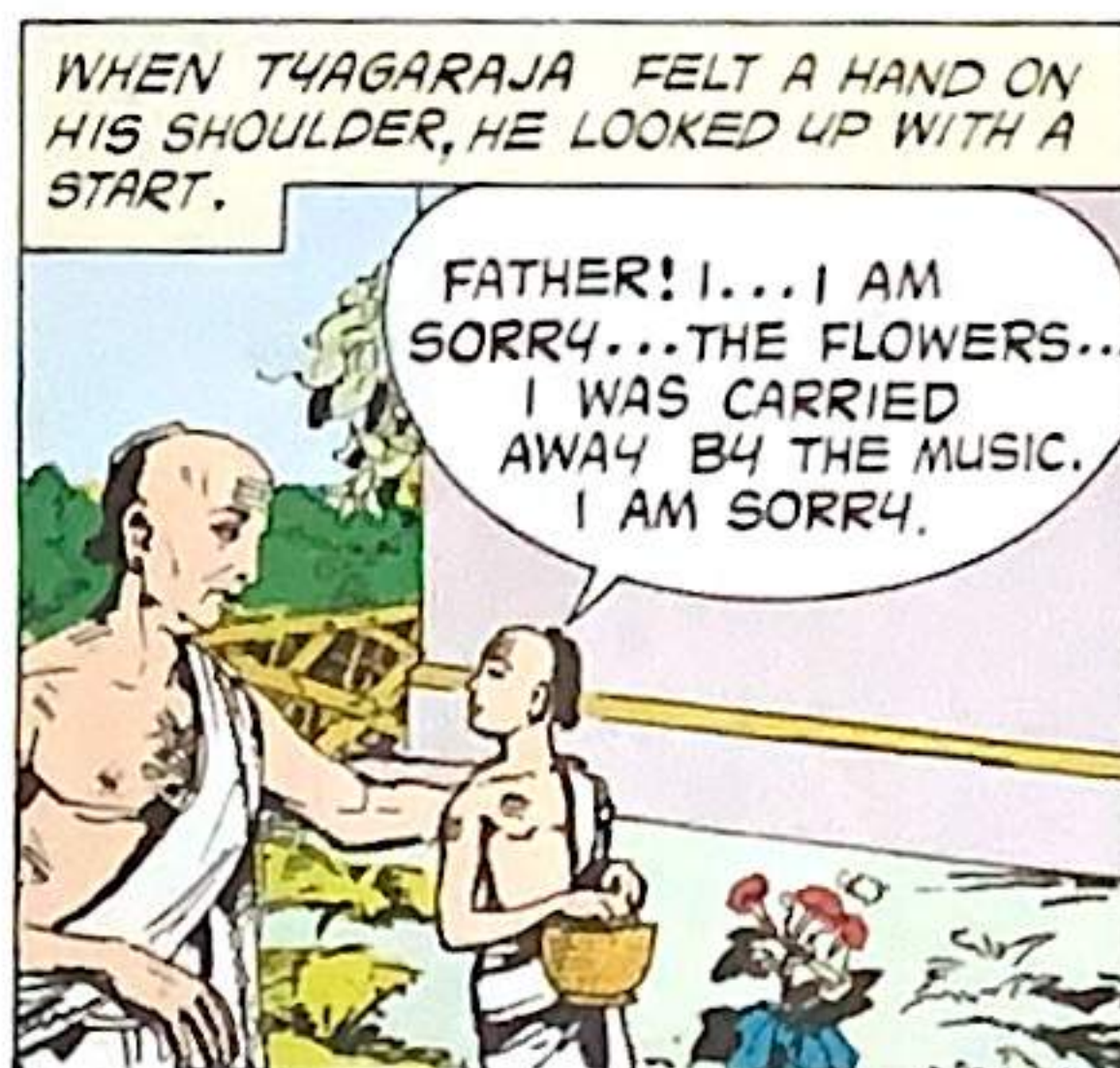
SUDDENLY THE SOUND OF MUSIC CAUGHT HIS ATTENTION.

THE VOICE IS UNMISTAKABLE! IT COULD ONLY BELONG TO ONE. IT MUST HAVE CHARMED THAGU TOO.



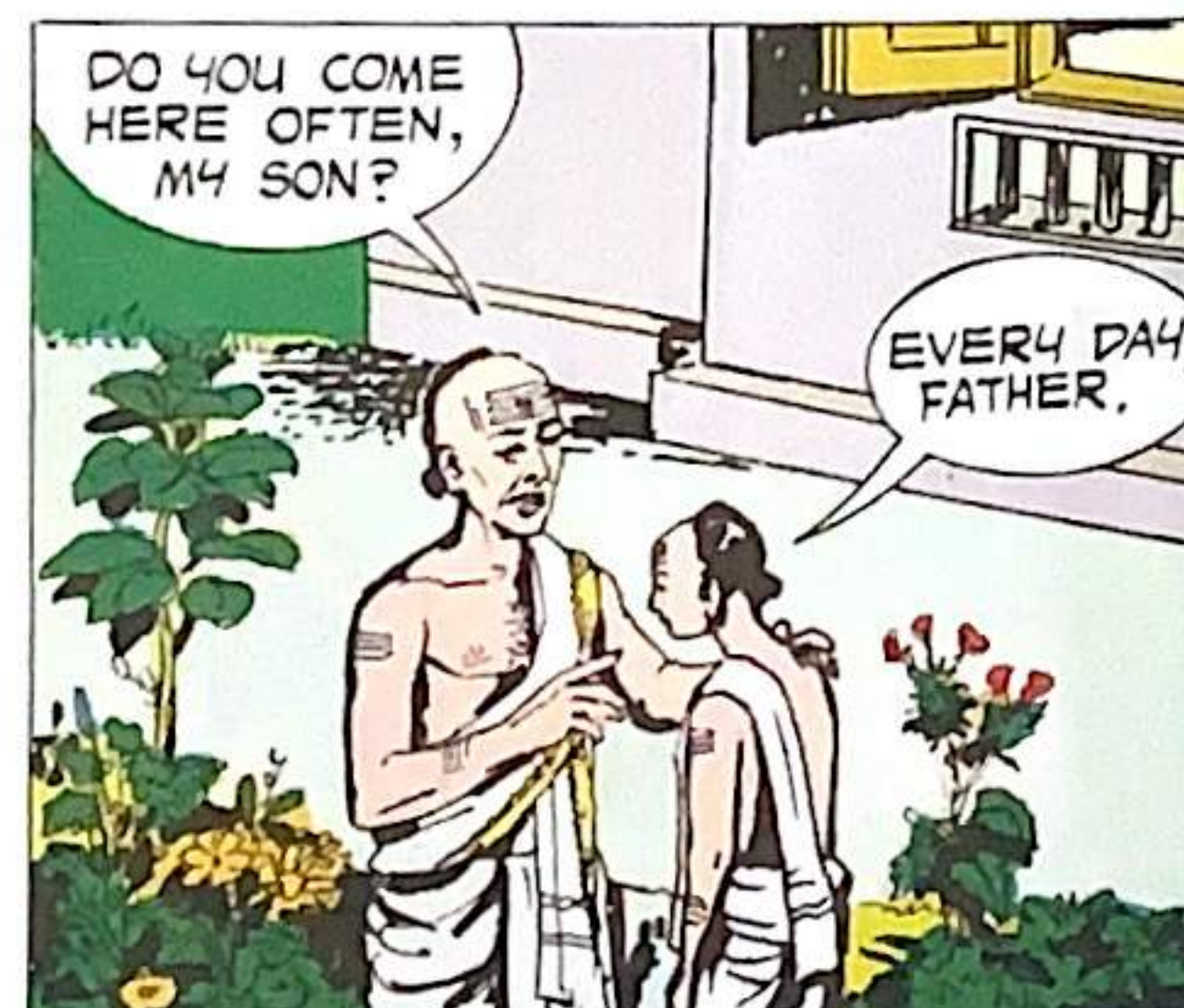
HE WALKED TOWARDS SONTI VENKATARAMANAYYA'S HOUSE.

AH! THERE HE IS.



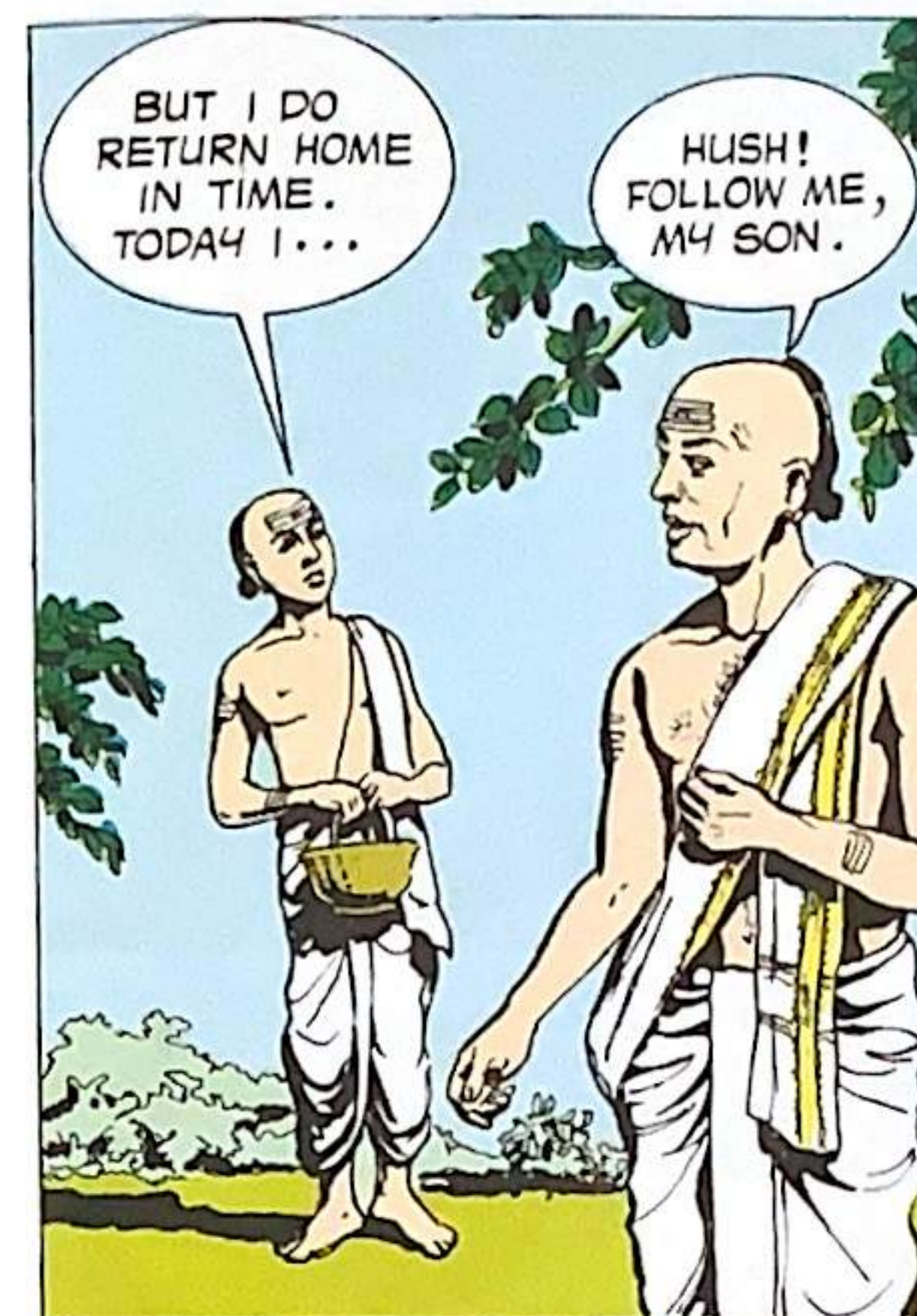
WHEN TYAGARAJA FELT A HAND ON HIS SHOULDER, HE LOOKED UP WITH A START.

FATHER! I... I AM SORRY... THE FLOWERS... I WAS CARRIED AWAY BY THE MUSIC. I AM SORRY.



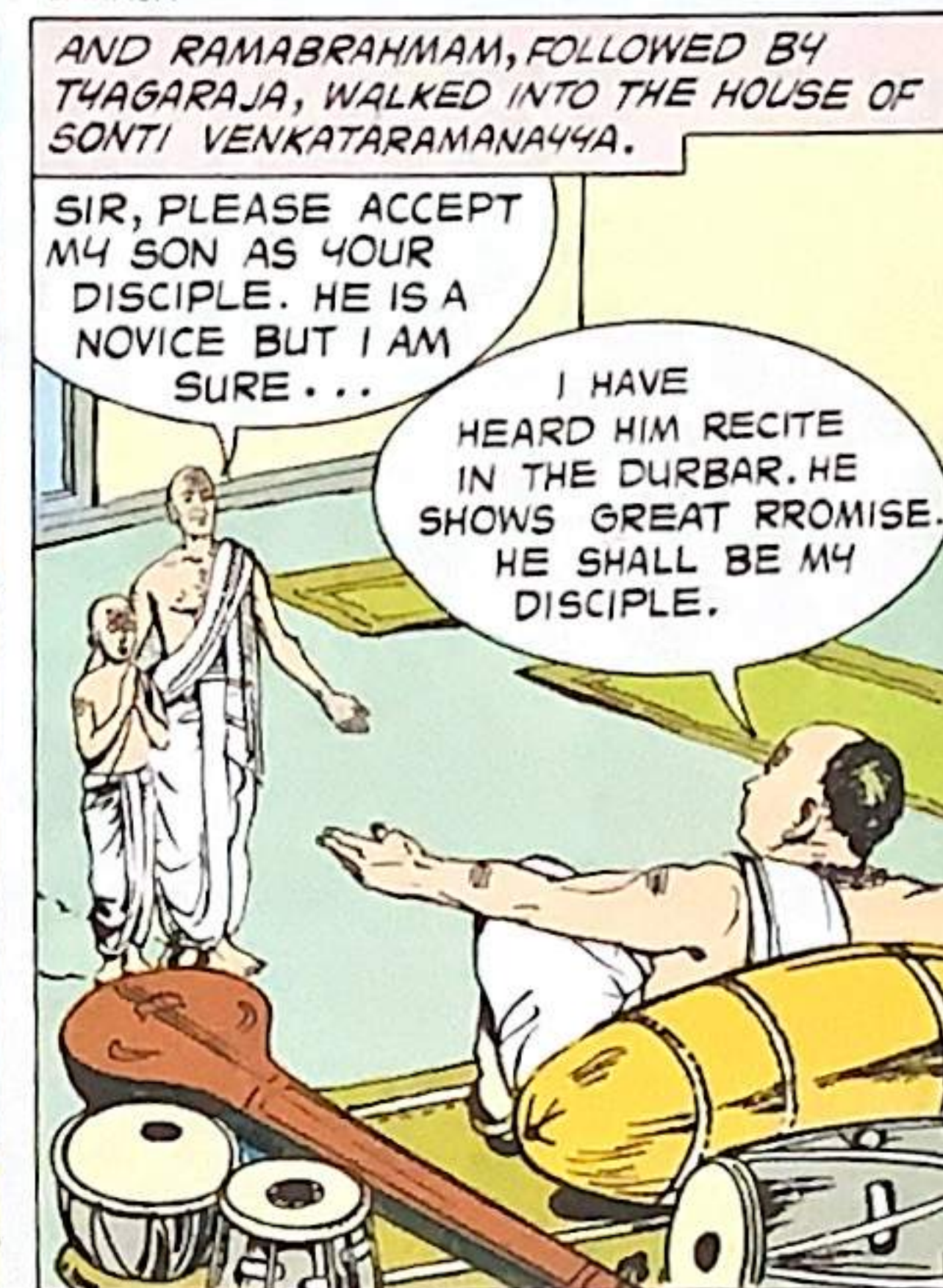
DO YOU COME HERE OFTEN, MY SON?

EVERY DAY, FATHER.



BUT I DO RETURN HOME IN TIME. TODAY I...

HUSH! FOLLOW ME, MY SON.

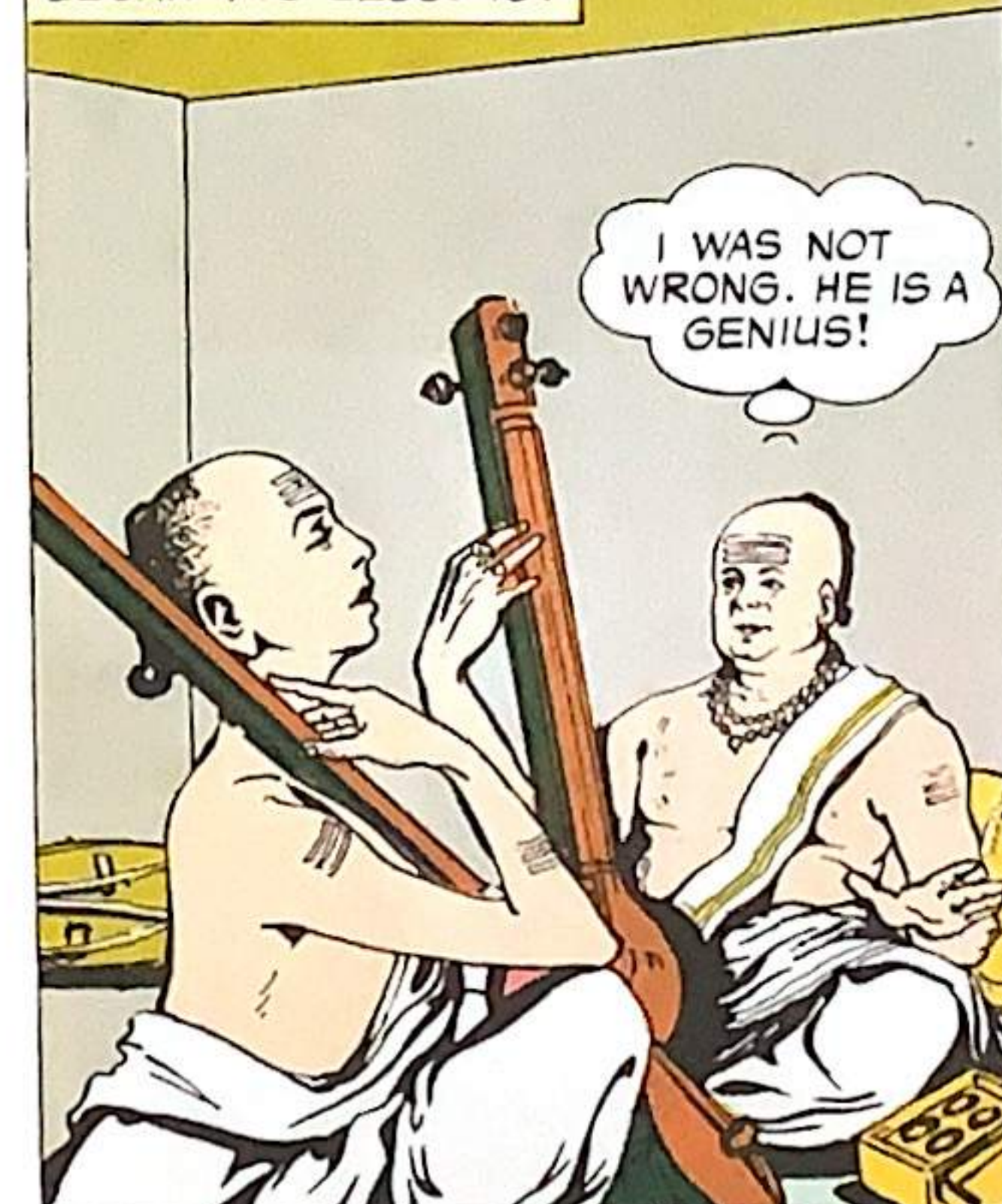


AND RAMABRAHMAM, FOLLOWED BY TYAGARAJA, WALKED INTO THE HOUSE OF SONTI VENKATARAMANAYYA.

SIR, PLEASE ACCEPT MY SON AS YOUR DISCIPLE. HE IS A NOVICE BUT I AM SURE...

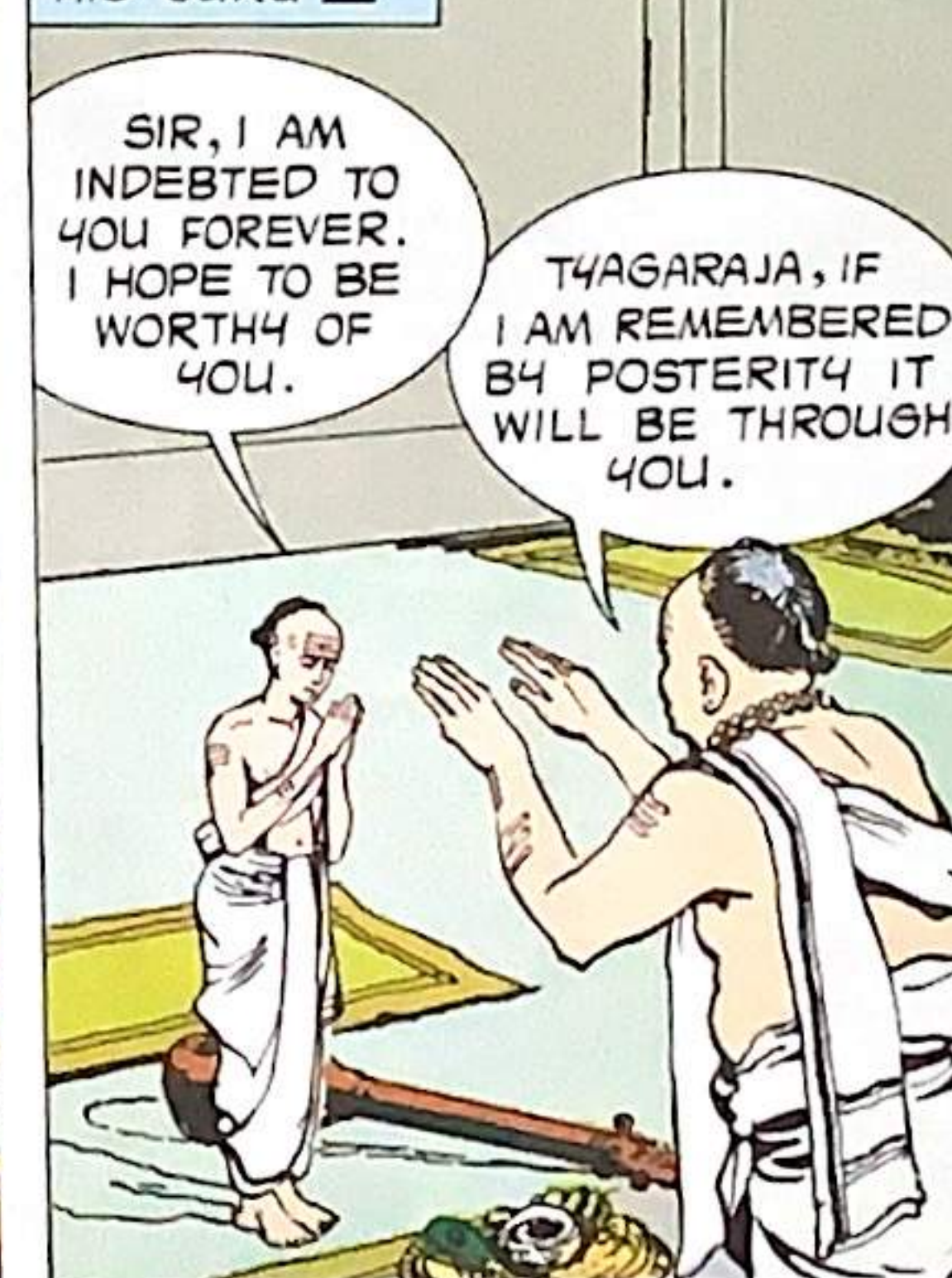
I HAVE HEARD HIM RECITE IN THE DURBAR. HE SHOWS GREAT PROMISE. HE SHALL BE MY DISCIPLE.

STAYING WITH THE GURU, AS WAS THE CUSTOM IN THOSE DAYS, TYAGARAJA BEGAN HIS LESSONS.



I WAS NOT WRONG. HE IS A GENIUS!

IT TOOK TYAGARAJA BUT ONE YEAR TO LEARN ALL THAT SONTI COULD TEACH HIM. AS HE TOOK LEAVE OF HIS GURU —



SIR, I AM INDEBTED TO YOU FOREVER. I HOPE TO BE WORTHY OF YOU.

TYAGARAJA, IF I AM REMEMBERED BY POSTERITY IT WILL BE THROUGH YOU.

THE FOLLOWING YEAR, TYAGARAJA WHO WAS NOW SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD, WAS MARRIED TO PARVATI*.



BUT MUSIC CONTINUED TO BE HIS FIRST LOVE. MANY DOUBTS IN MUSICOLOGY BEGAN TO WORRY HIM.

TO WHOM CAN I TURN? WHO IS THERE WHO WILL GUIDE ME?



THEN ONE MORNING, A SANYASI CAME TO HIS HOUSE.

I HAVE HEARD OF YOU. SING FOR ME.



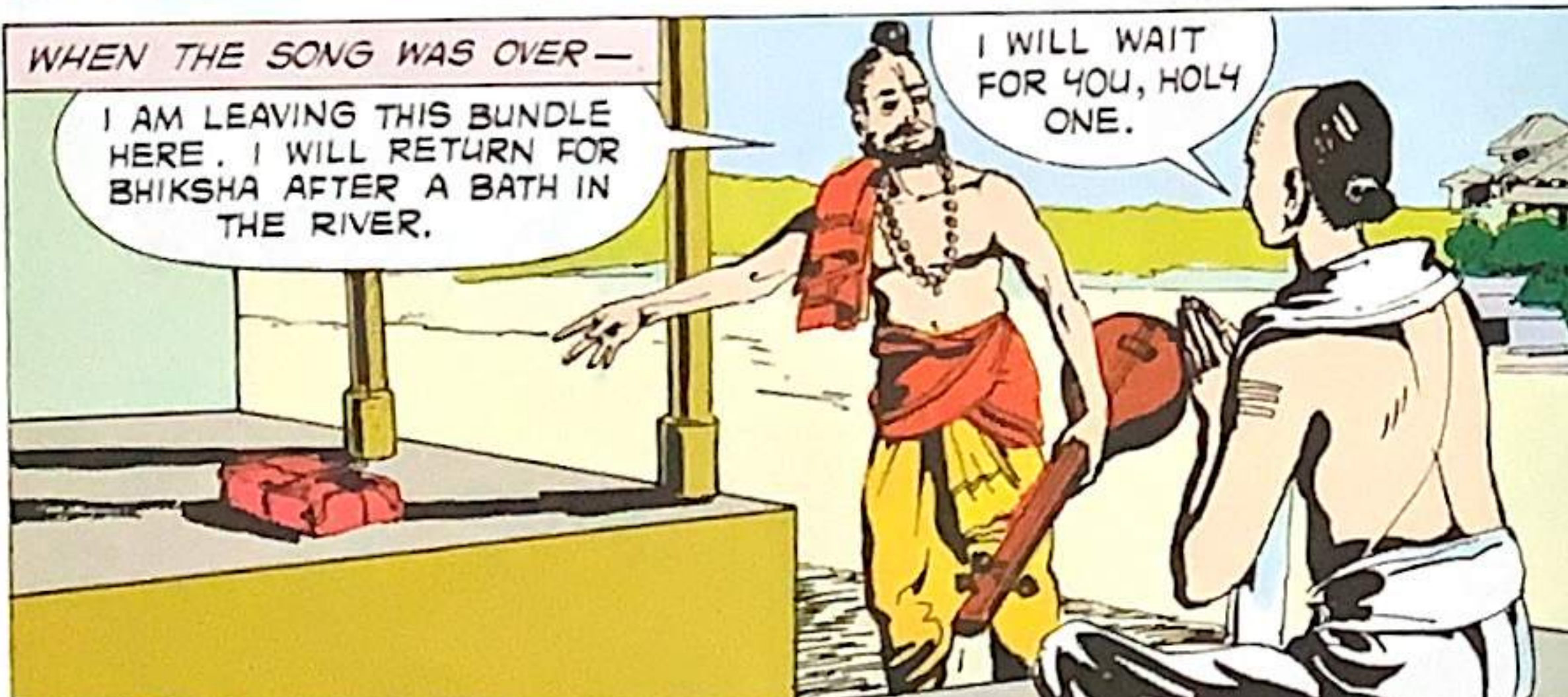
I BOW TO SHANKARA THE EMBODIMENT OF NADA... TO HIM WHO DELIGHTS IN THE SEVEN SVARAS, SA-RI-GA-MA-PA-DHA-NI, I BOW.



WHEN THE SONG WAS OVER—

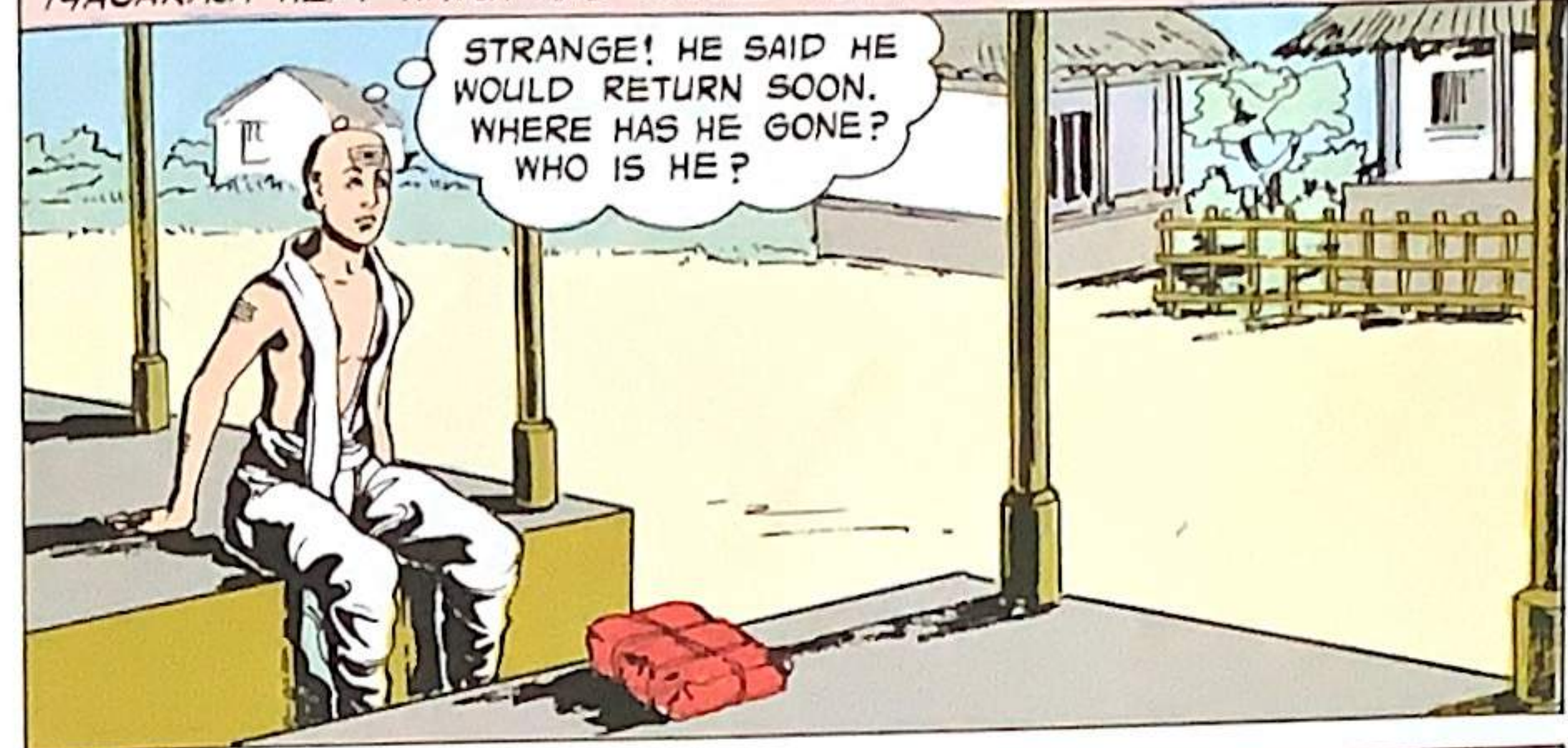
I AM LEAVING THIS BUNDLE HERE. I WILL RETURN FOR BHIKSHA AFTER A BATH IN THE RIVER.

I WILL WAIT FOR YOU, HOLY ONE.



*FIVE YEARS LATER, WHEN PARVATI DIED, HE MARRIED HER SISTER, DHARMAMBA.

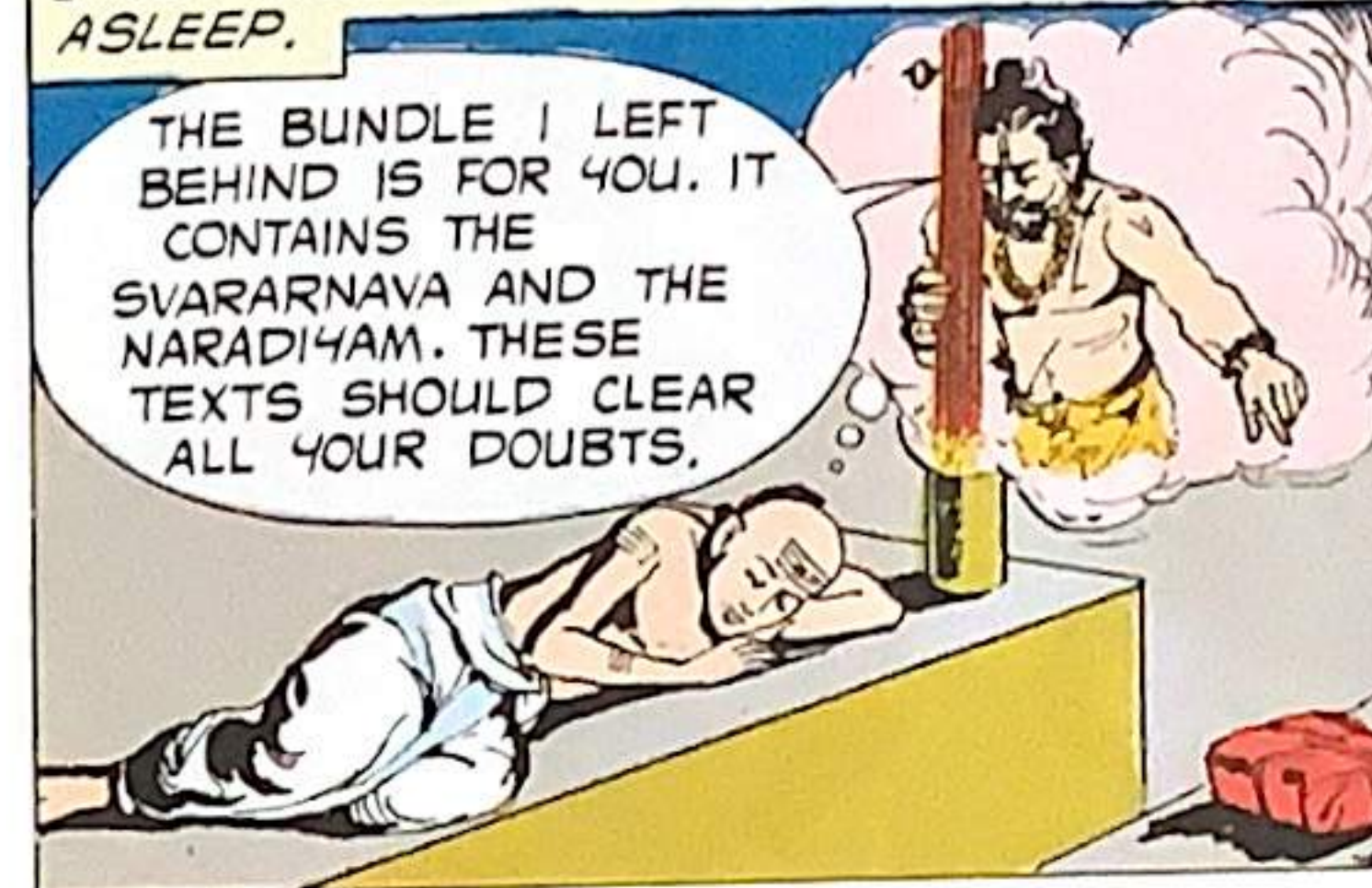
TYAGARAJA KEPT WATCH AND WAITED FOR HIM AS THE HOURS WENT BY.



STRANGE! HE SAID HE WOULD RETURN SOON. WHERE HAS HE GONE? WHO IS HE?

NIGHT FELL, BUT THERE WAS NO SIGN OF THE SAGE. TIRED AND HUNGRY, TYAGARAJA FELL ASLEEP.

THE BUNDLE I LEFT BEHIND IS FOR YOU. IT CONTAINS THE SVARARNAVA AND THE NARADIYAM. THESE TEXTS SHOULD CLEAR ALL YOUR DOUBTS.



TYAGARAJA SAT UP WITH A START.

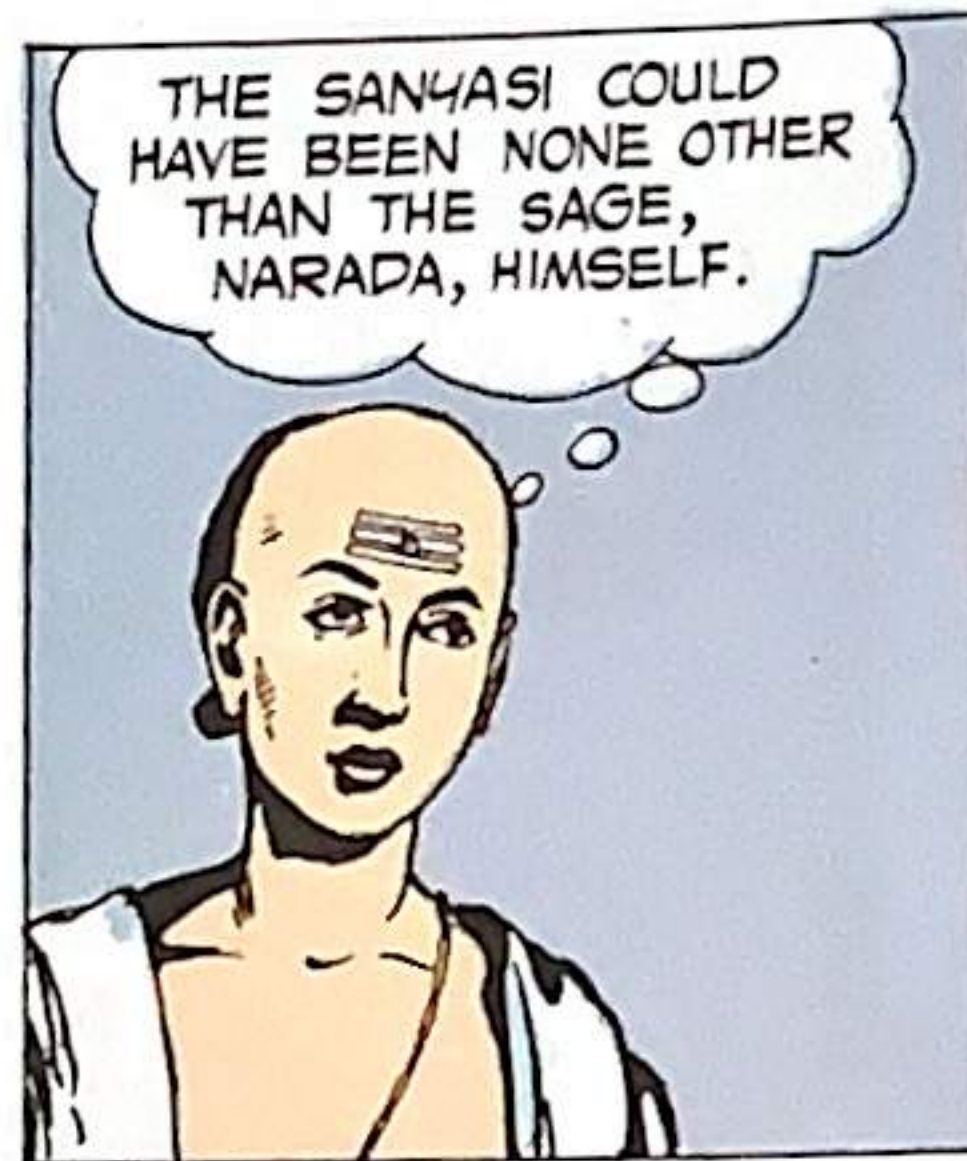
WAS HE HERE? OR WAS IT A DREAM?



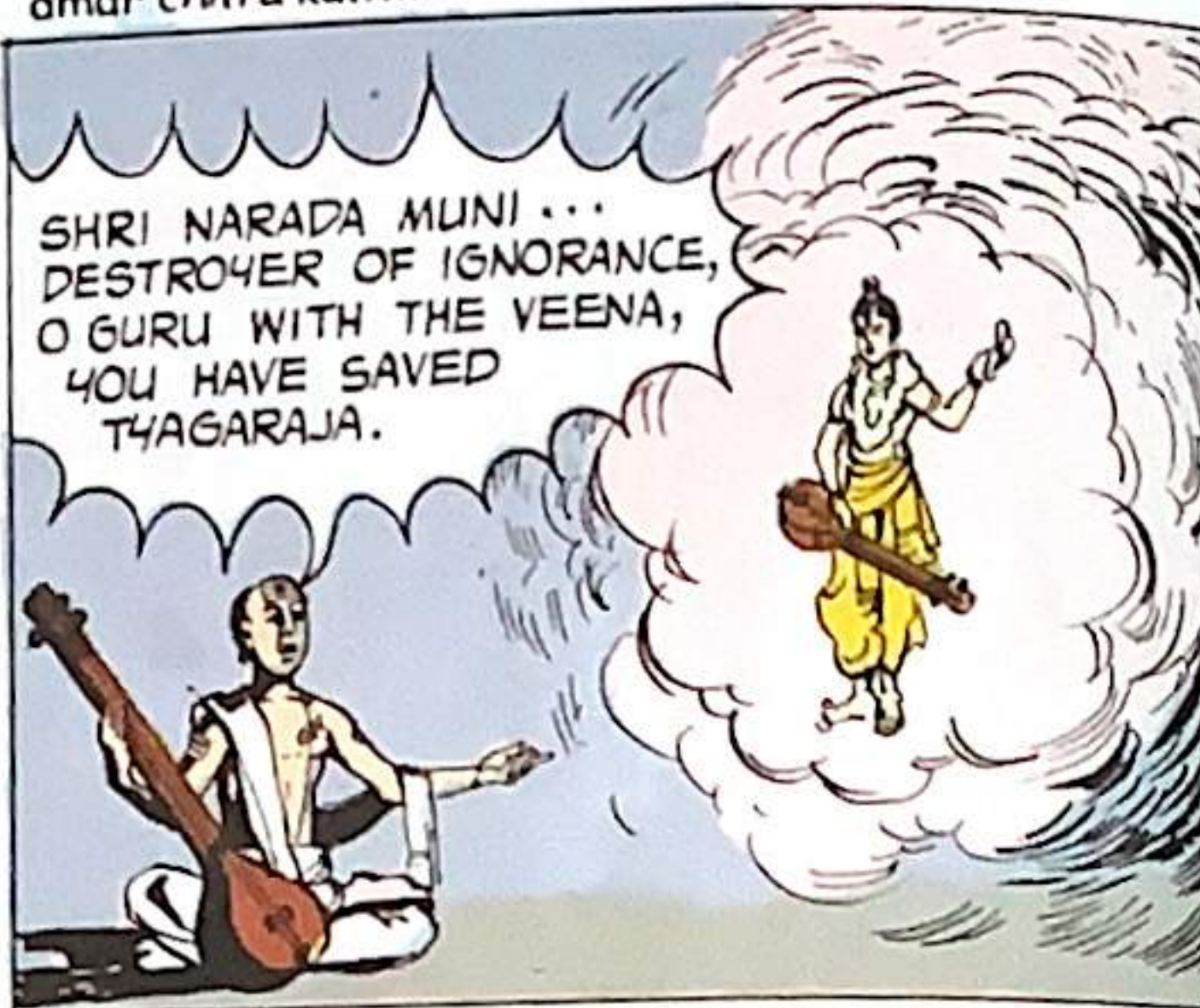
HE HURRIEDLY OPENED THE BUNDLE.

WELL. IT WAS NO EMPTY DREAM. HERE ARE THOSE FAMOUS TEXTS ON MUSIC!





THE SANYASI COULD HAVE BEEN NONE OTHER THAN THE SAGE, NARADA, HIMSELF.



SHRI NARADA MUNI... DESTROYER OF IGNORANCE, O GURU WITH THE VEENA, YOU HAVE SAVED TYAGARAJA.

TYAGARAJA PORED OVER THE TEXTS NIGHT AND DAY TILL HE HAD MASTERED THEM. HE WAS IN ECSTASY.



... A DEEP KNOWLEDGE OF THE SECRETS OF THE SVARARNAVA, ONCE IMPARTED TO PARVATI BY LORD SHIVA, IS NOW POSSESSED BY TYAGARAJA...

HE SOON PROVED THAT IN AN ASSEMBLY OF MUSICIANS AT THE PALACE OF THE RAJA OF PUDUKOTTAI.



I CHALLENGE ANY MUSICIAN ASSEMBLED HERE TO LIGHT THIS LAMP BY HIS MUSIC ALONE!

NONE OF THE MUSICIANS GOT UP.



NO ONE CAN PERFORM THIS MIRACLE.

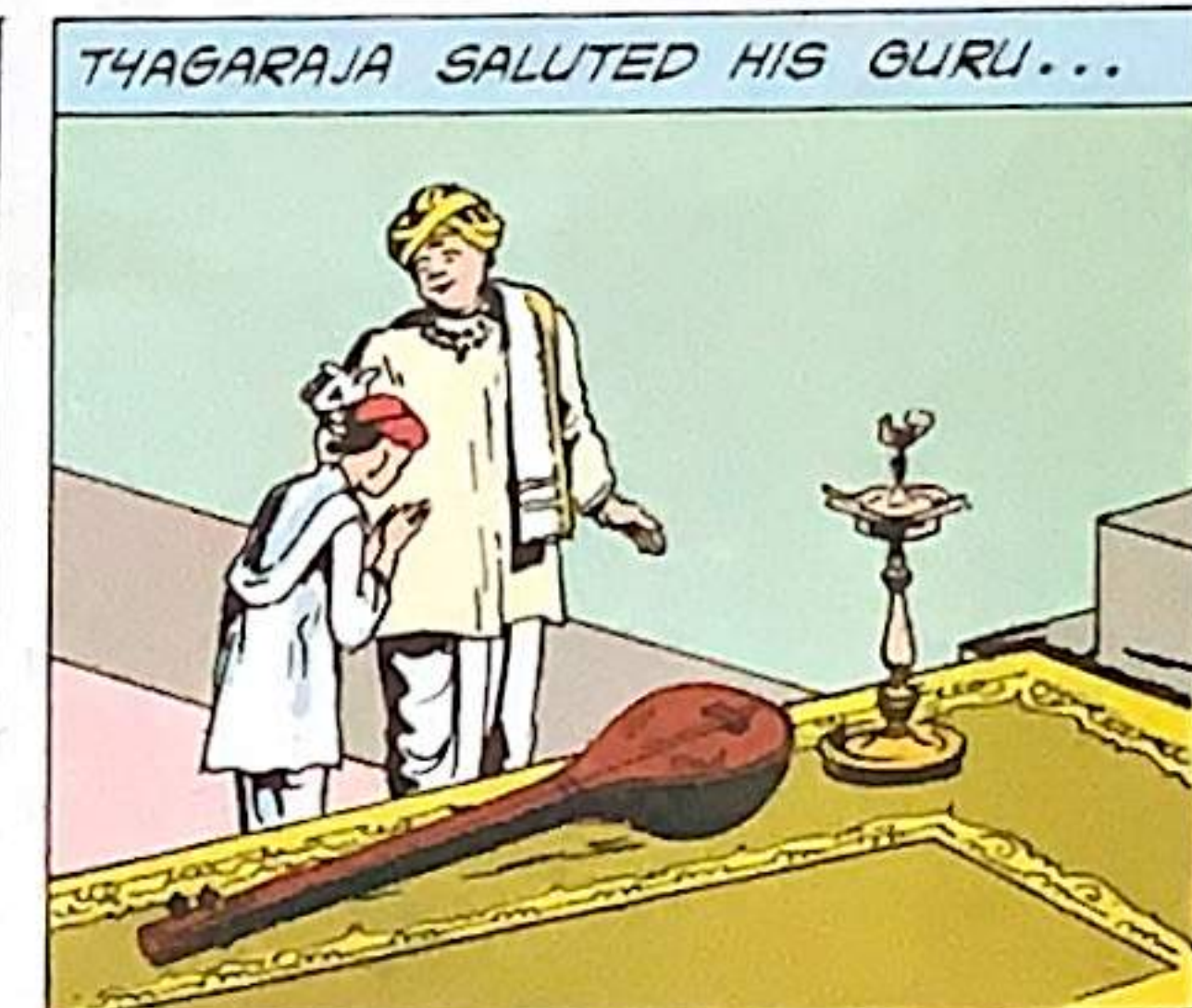


SHALL I TAKE IT THAT MUSIC HAS NO POWER TO LIGHT THIS LAMP?



IT DOES, MAHARAJA. AND YOUNG TYAGARAJA WILL DEMONSTRATE IT.

IT WAS SONTI VENKATARAMANAYYA.



TYAGARAJA SALUTED HIS GURU...

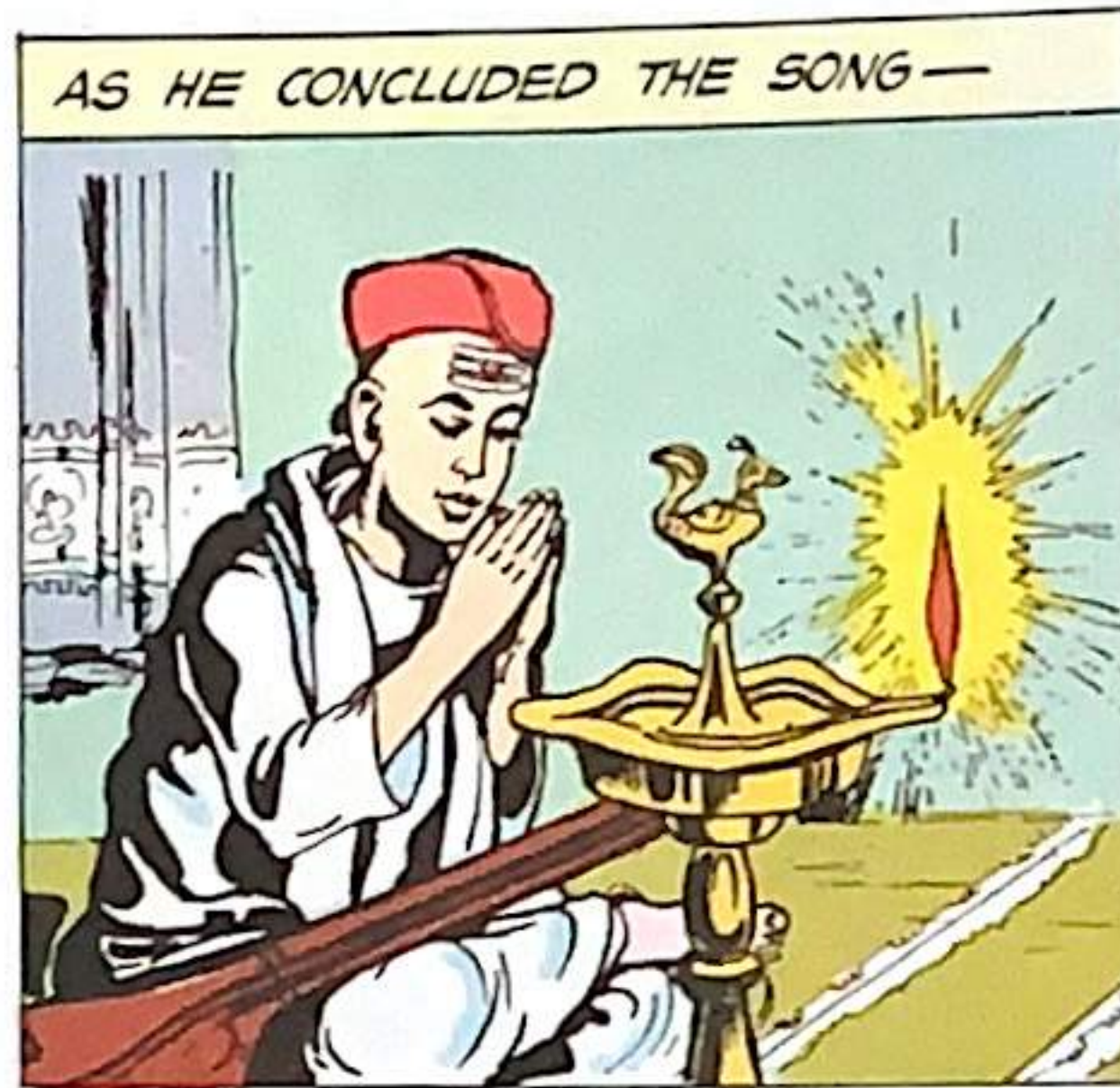


... TUNED HIS TAMBURA ...

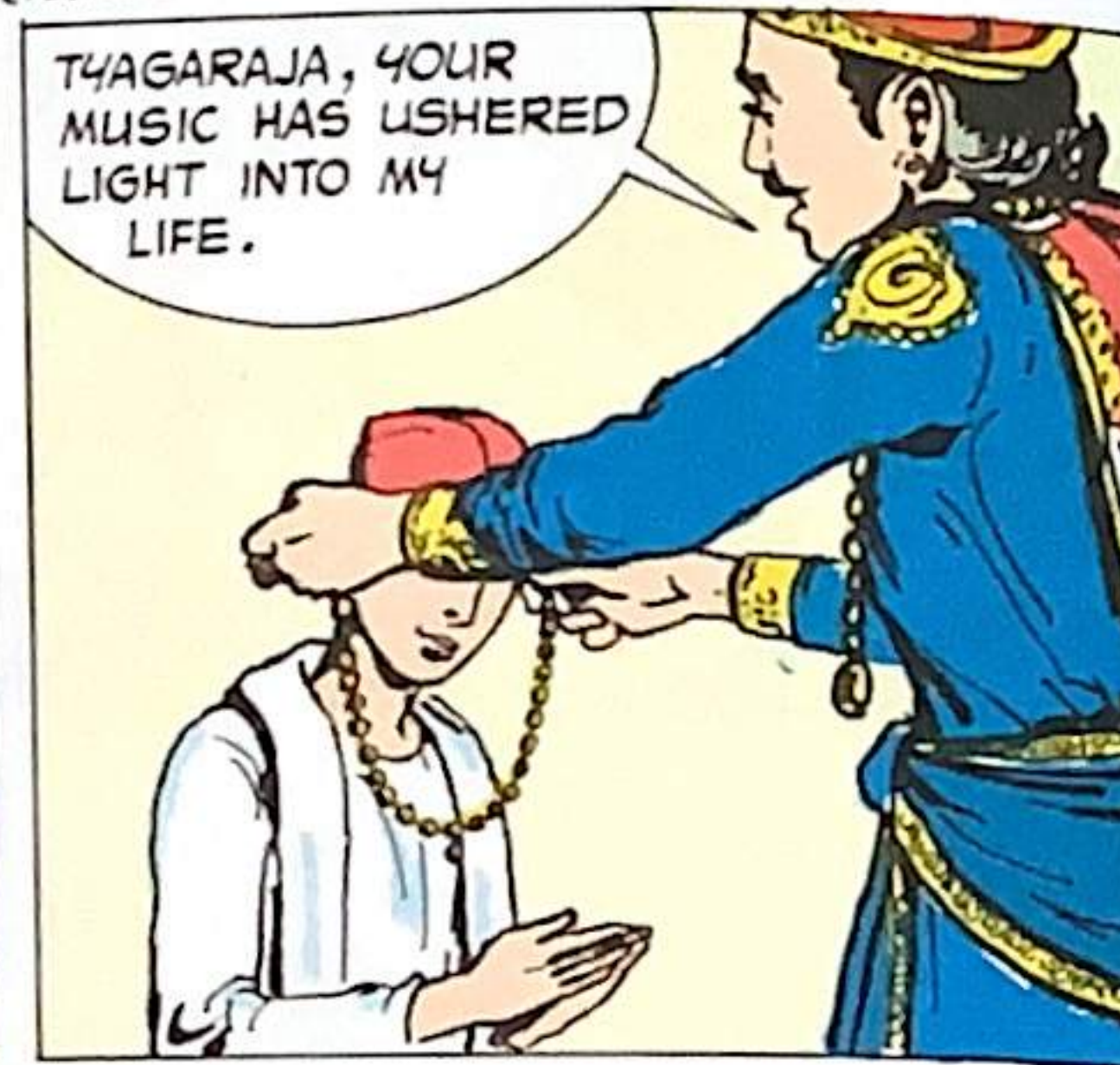
* MUSICAL MODE



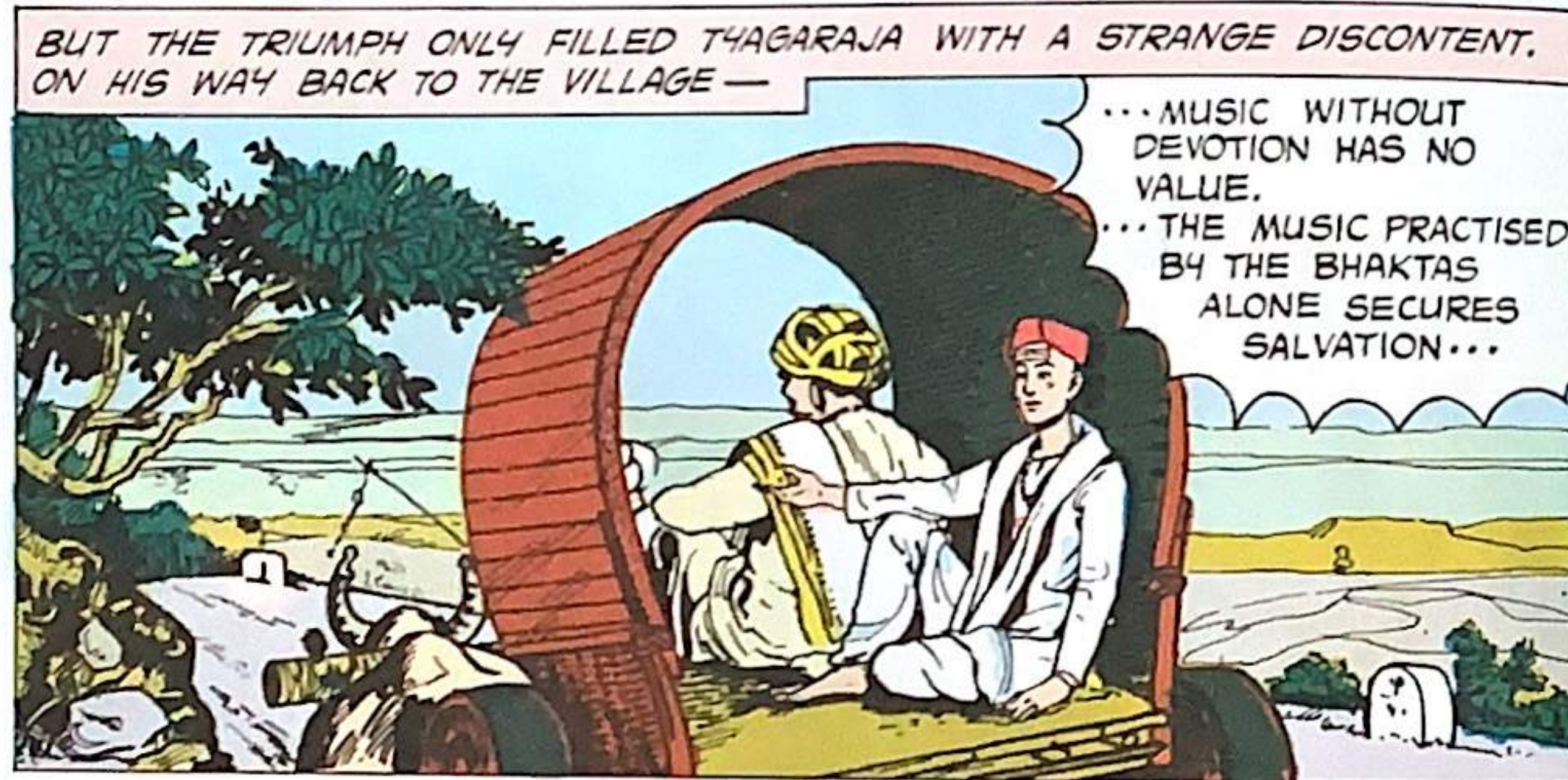
... AND SANG THE RAGA *, JYOTI SWAROOPINI.



AS HE CONCLUDED THE SONG —

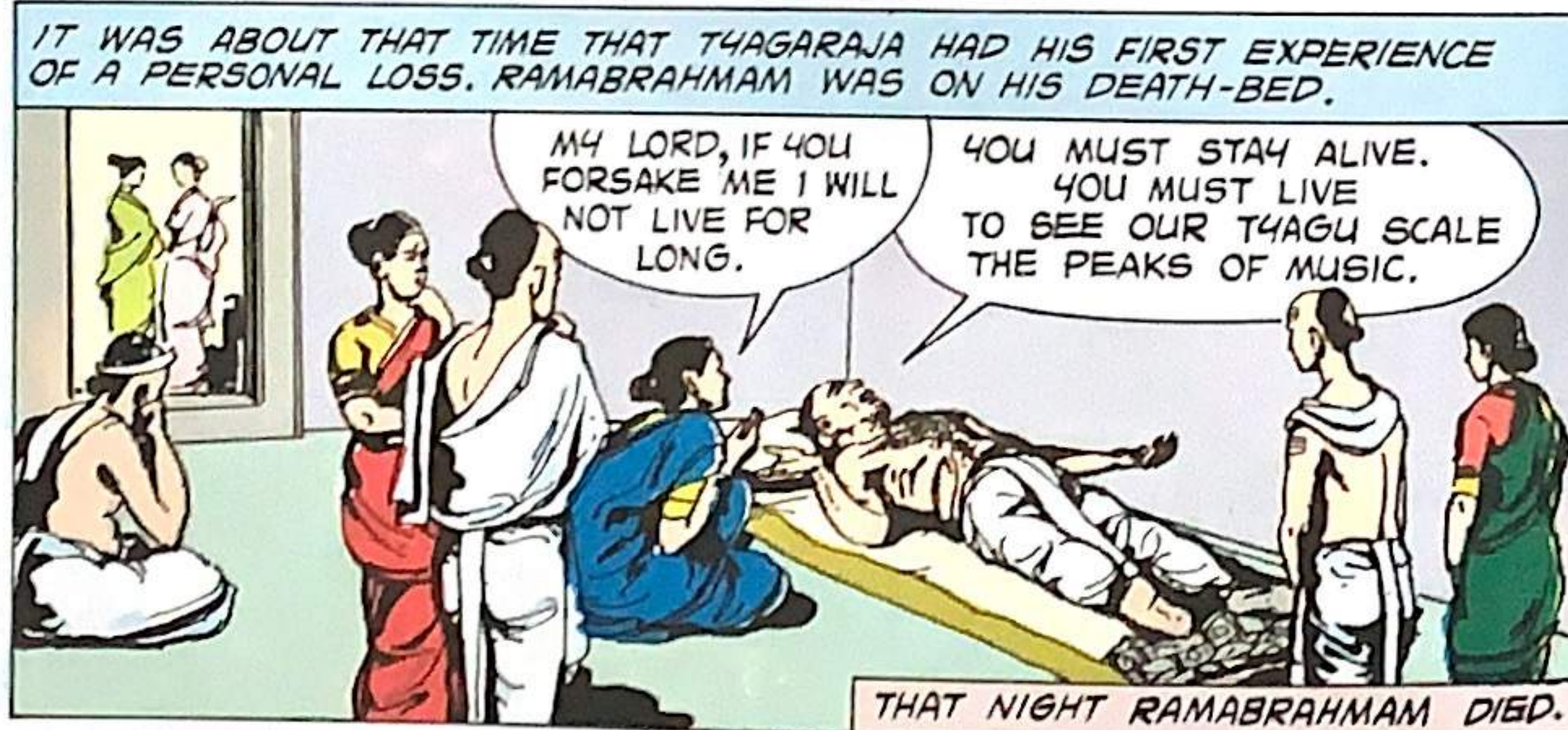


THAGARAJA, YOUR MUSIC HAS USHERED LIGHT INTO MY LIFE.



BUT THE TRIUMPH ONLY FILLED THAGARAJA WITH A STRANGE DISCONTENT, ON HIS WAY BACK TO THE VILLAGE —

...MUSIC WITHOUT DEVOTION HAS NO VALUE.
...THE MUSIC PRACTISED BY THE BHAKTAS ALONE SECURES SALVATION...

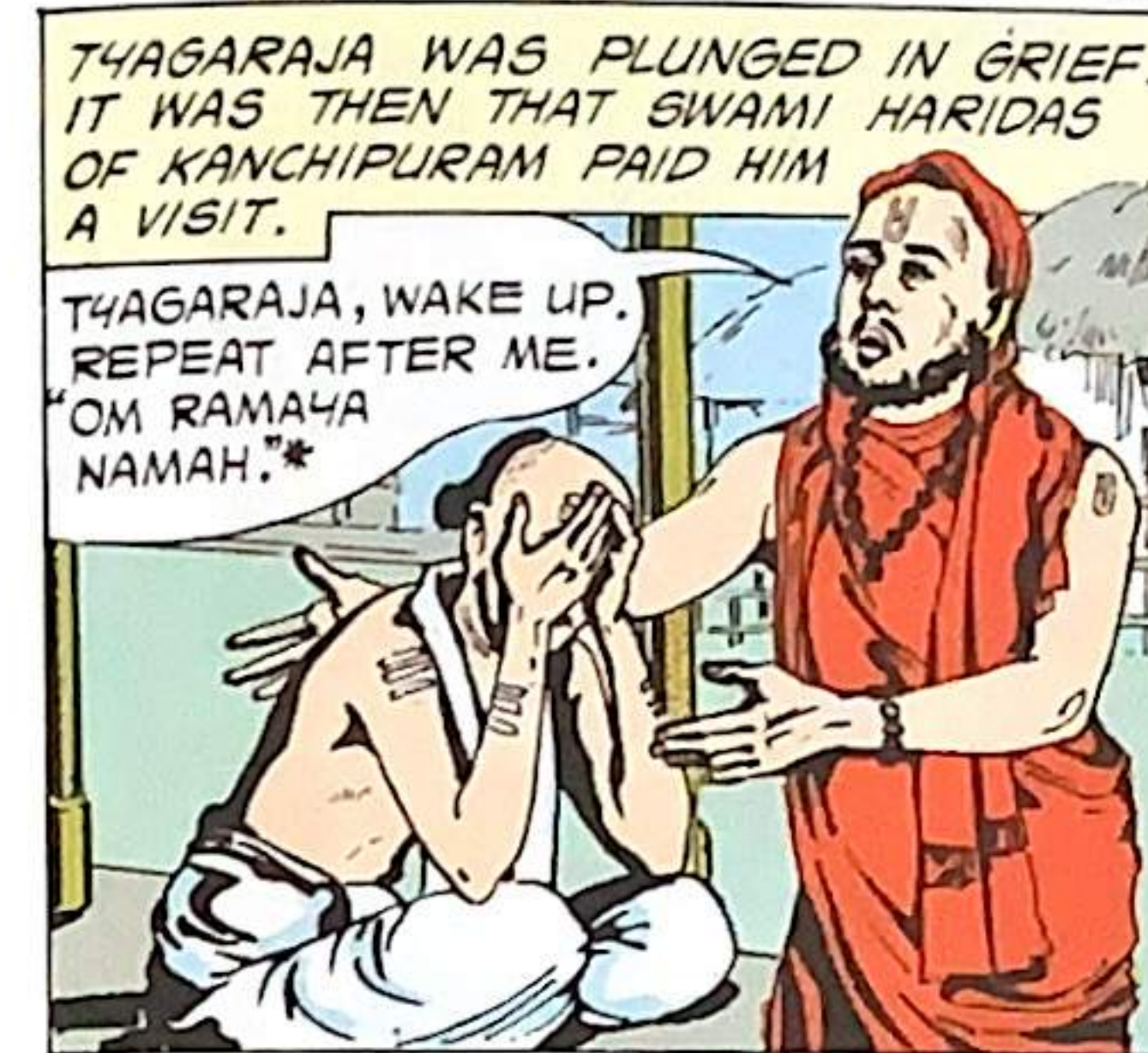


IT WAS ABOUT THAT TIME THAT THAGARAJA HAD HIS FIRST EXPERIENCE OF A PERSONAL LOSS. RAMABRAHMAM WAS ON HIS DEATH-BED.

MY LORD, IF YOU FORSAKE ME I WILL NOT LIVE FOR LONG.

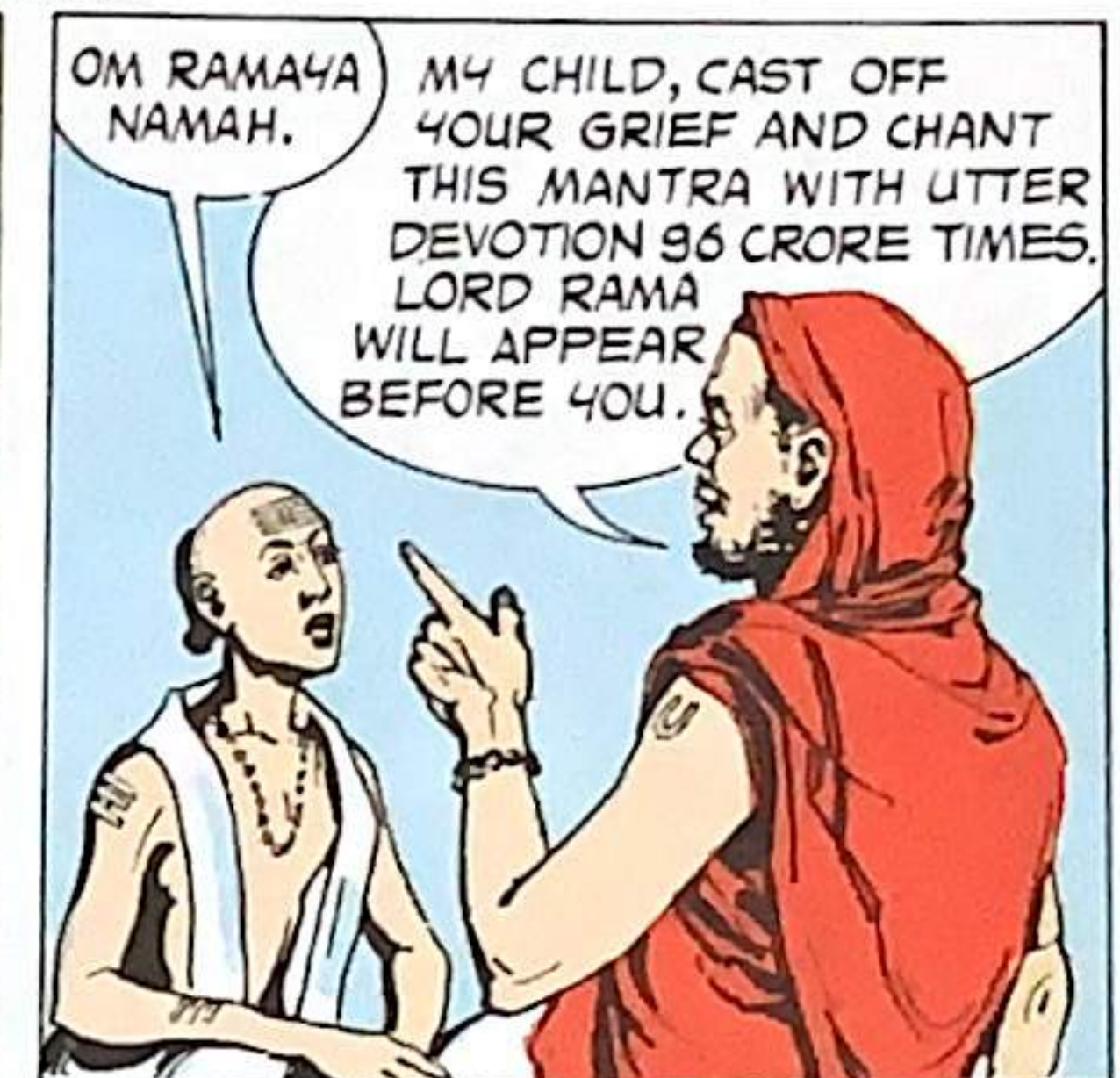
YOU MUST STAY ALIVE. YOU MUST LIVE TO SEE OUR THAGU SCALE THE PEAKS OF MUSIC.

THAT NIGHT RAMABRAHMAM DIED.



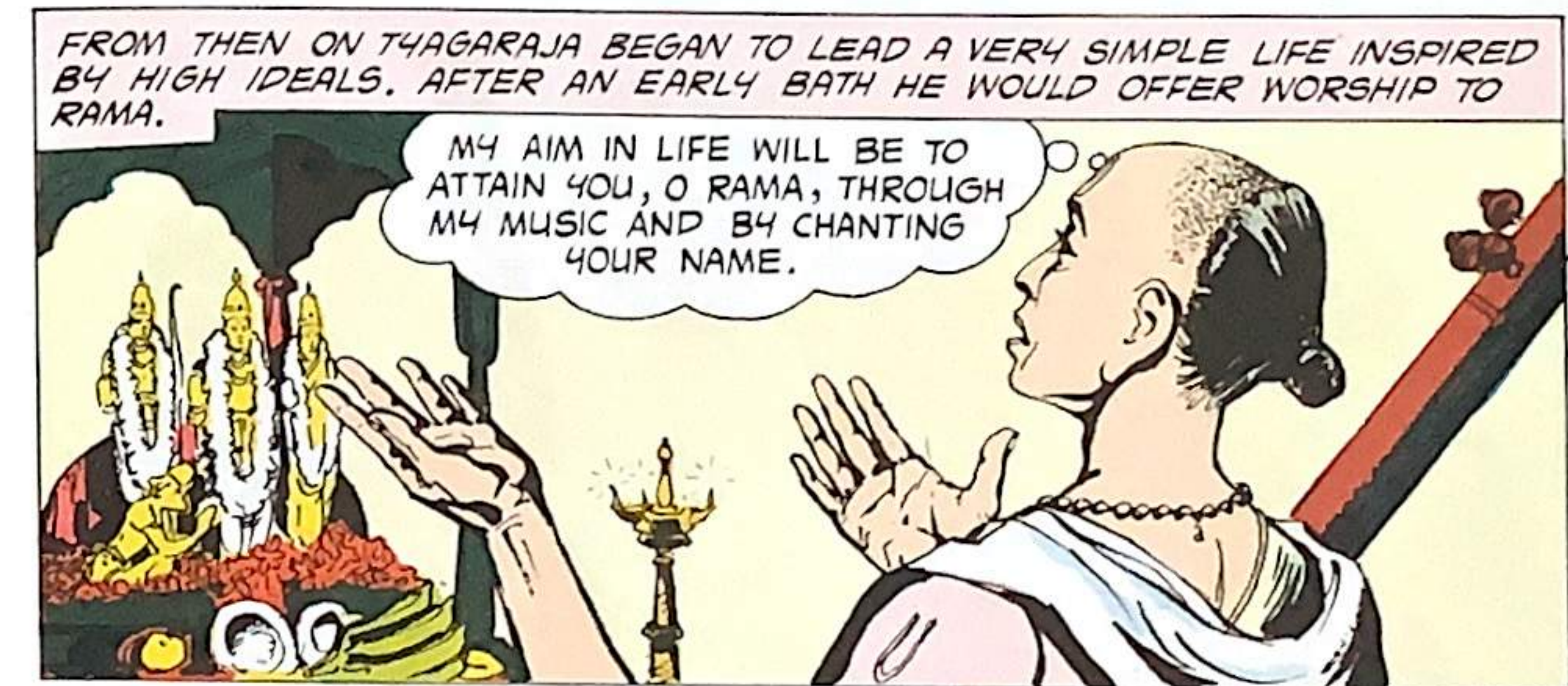
THAGARAJA WAS PLUNGED IN GRIEF. IT WAS THEN THAT SWAMI HARIDAS OF KANCHIPURAM PAID HIM A VISIT.

THAGARAJA, WAKE UP. REPEAT AFTER ME. "OM RAMAYA NAMAH."*



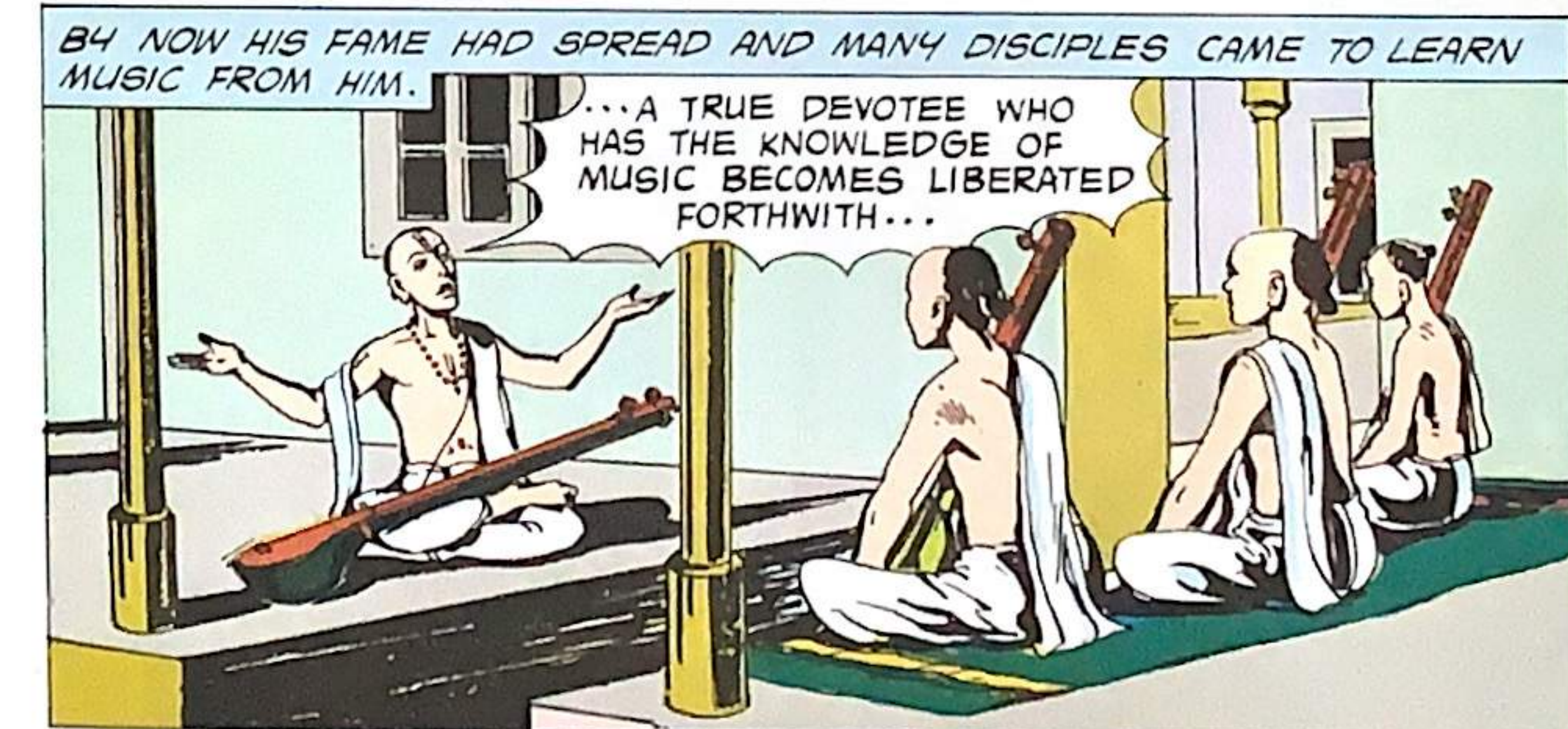
OM RAMAYA NAMAH.

MY CHILD, CAST OFF YOUR GRIEF AND CHANT THIS MANTRA WITH UTTER DEVOTION 96 CRORE TIMES. LORD RAMA WILL APPEAR BEFORE YOU.



FROM THEN ON THAGARAJA BEGAN TO LEAD A VERY SIMPLE LIFE INSPIRED BY HIGH IDEALS. AFTER AN EARLY BATH HE WOULD OFFER WORSHIP TO RAMA.

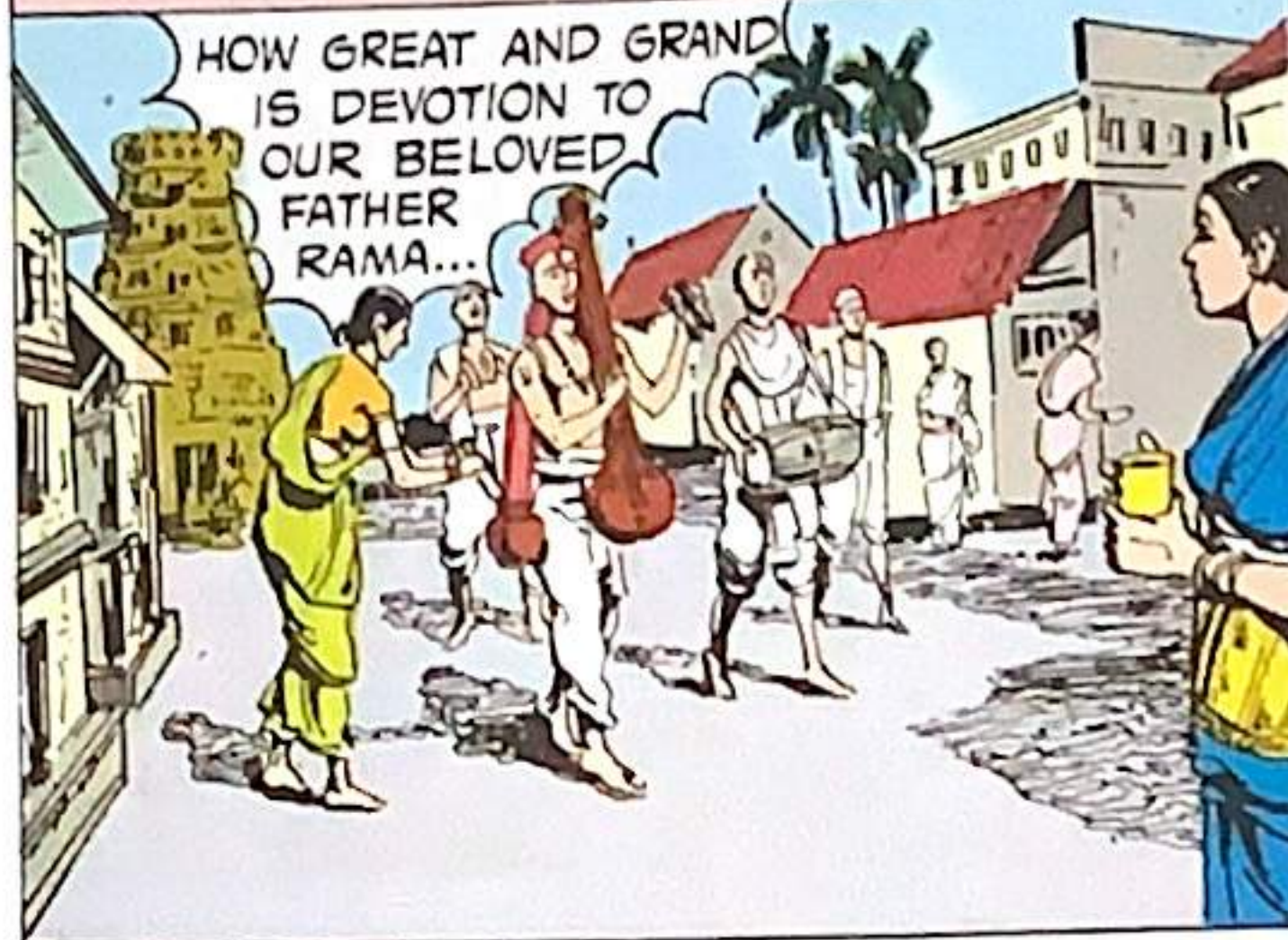
MY AIM IN LIFE WILL BE TO ATTAIN YOU, O RAMA, THROUGH MY MUSIC AND BY CHANTING YOUR NAME.



BY NOW HIS FAME HAD SPREAD AND MANY DISCIPLES CAME TO LEARN MUSIC FROM HIM.

...A TRUE DEVOTEE WHO HAS THE KNOWLEDGE OF MUSIC BECOMES LIBERATED FORTHWITH...

AT NOON ONCE A WEEK HE WOULD GO OUT WITH THEM INTO THE STREET SINGING SONGS.



HOW GREAT AND GRAND IS DEVOTION TO OUR BELOVED FATHER RAMA...

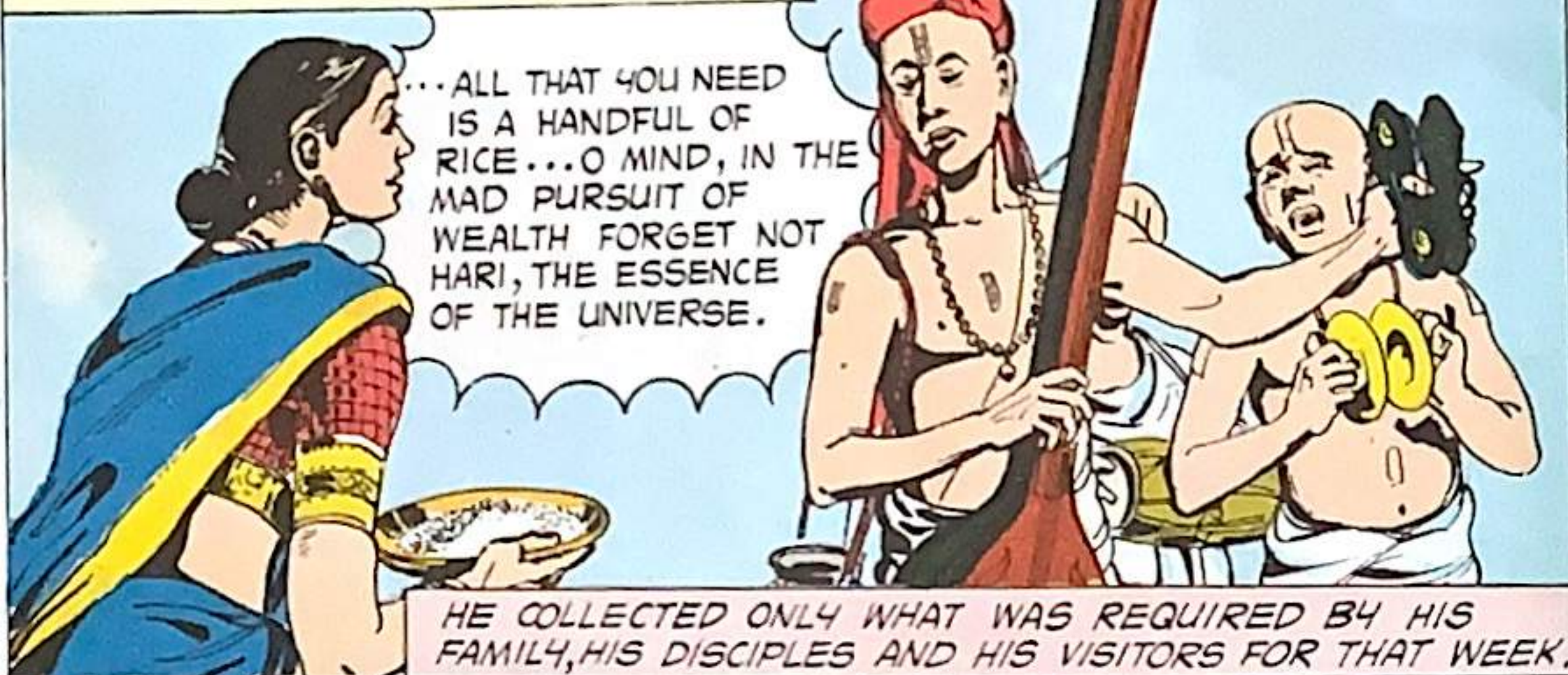
PEOPLE CONSIDERED THEMSELVES BLESSED IF TYAGARAJA ACCEPTED THEIR OFFERINGS.



THAT'S ENOUGH. THE VESSEL IS FULL.

WON'T YOU LET ME GIVE YOU ALL OF IT?

IN REPLY TO HER, TYAGARAJA SANG—



...ALL THAT YOU NEED IS A HANDFUL OF RICE...O MIND, IN THE MAD PURSUIT OF WEALTH FORGET NOT HARI, THE ESSENCE OF THE UNIVERSE.

HE COLLECTED ONLY WHAT WAS REQUIRED BY HIS FAMILY, HIS DISCIPLES AND HIS VISITORS FOR THAT WEEK.

IN THE AFTERNOON TYAGARAJA SAT INSIDE THE DAKSHINA KAILASA TEMPLE AND CHANTED THE MANTRA.

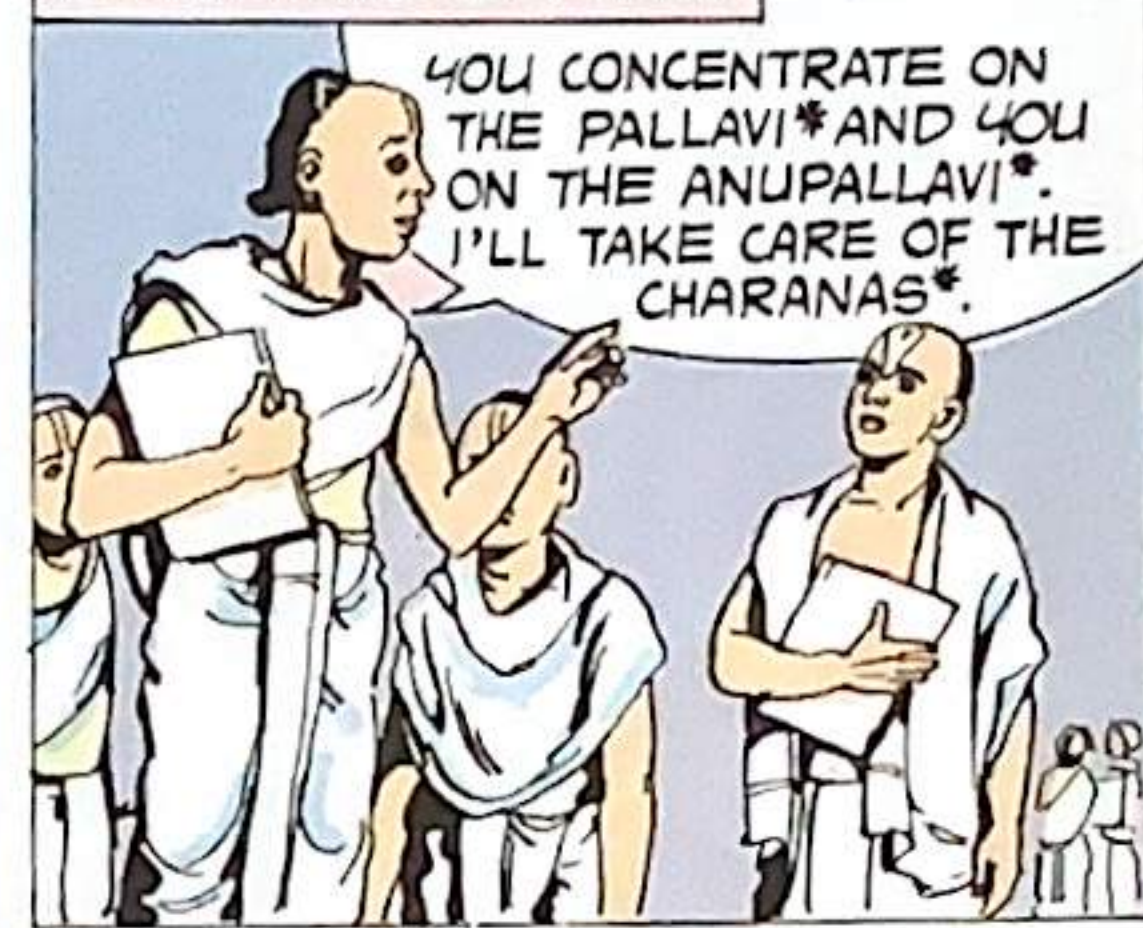


OM RAMA NAMAH OM RAMA...

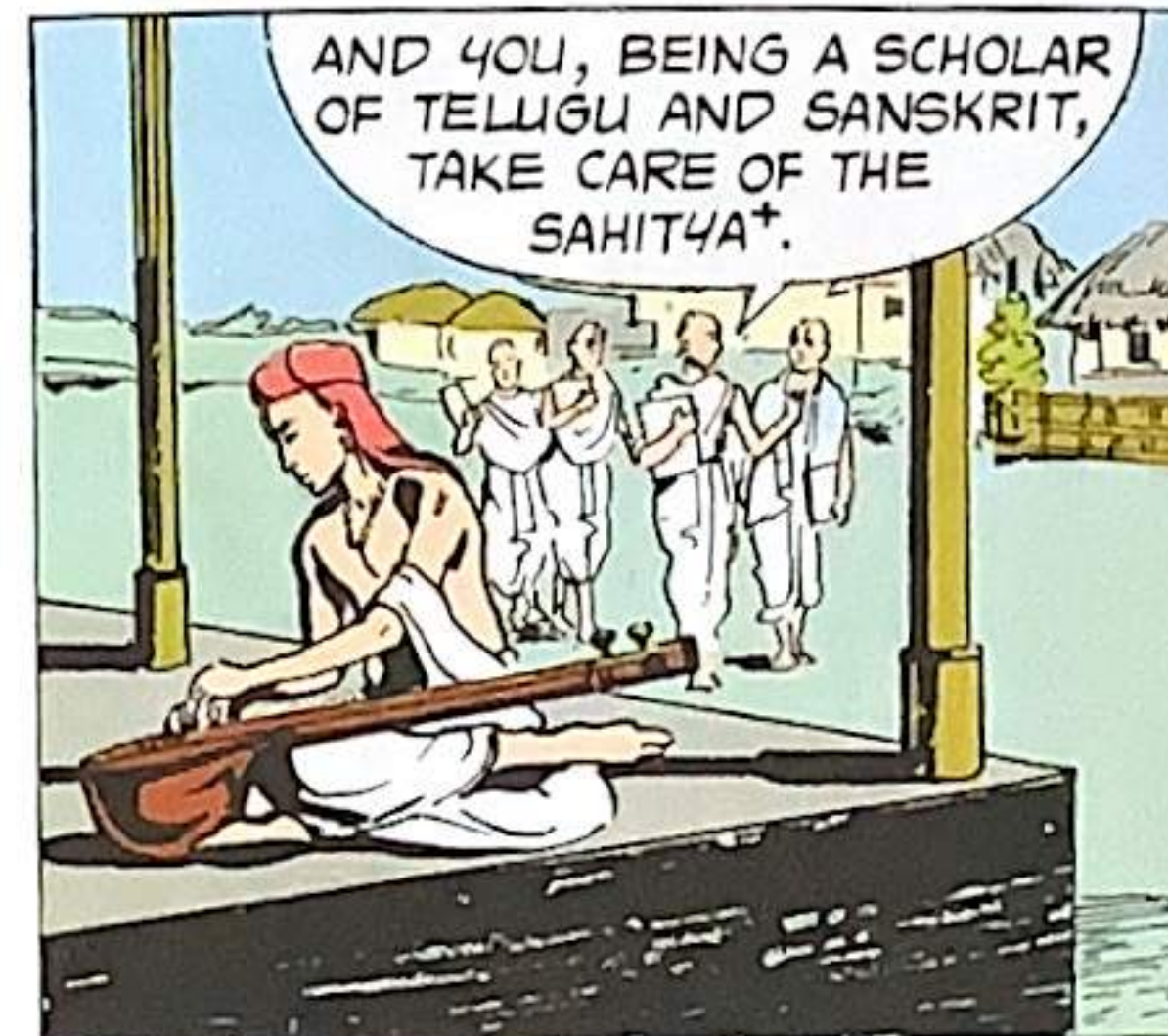
THE APPEAL OF THE SONGS THAT GUSHED OUT OF HIM NOW, BROUGHT HIM MANY MORE DISCIPLES.



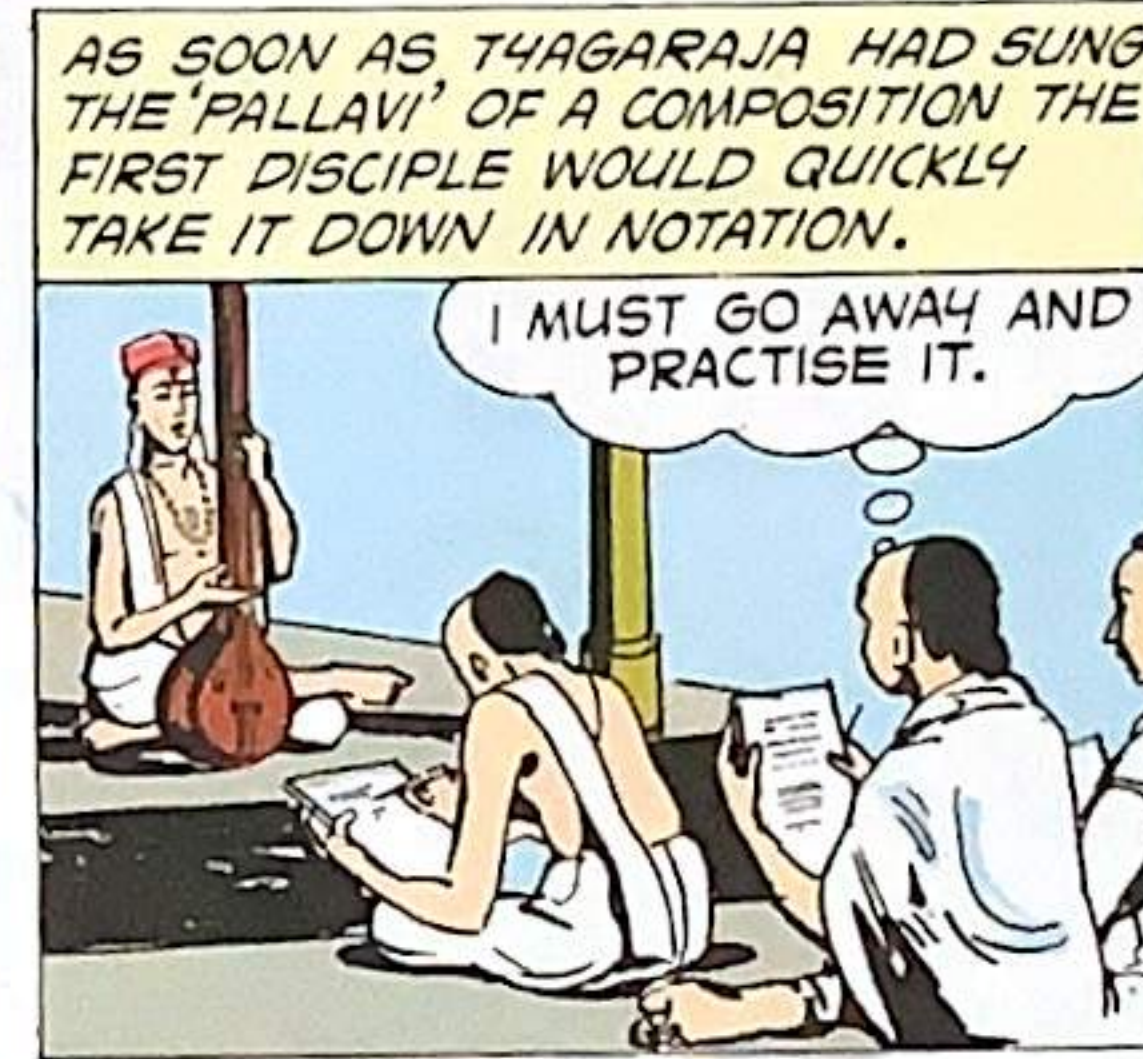
THEY HAD A UNIQUE WAY OF RECORDING HIS COMPOSITIONS FOR POSTERITY. THEY DIVIDED THEMSELVES INTO GROUPS OF FOUR.



YOU CONCENTRATE ON THE PALLAVI* AND YOU ON THE ANUPALLAVI*. I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE CHARANAS*.



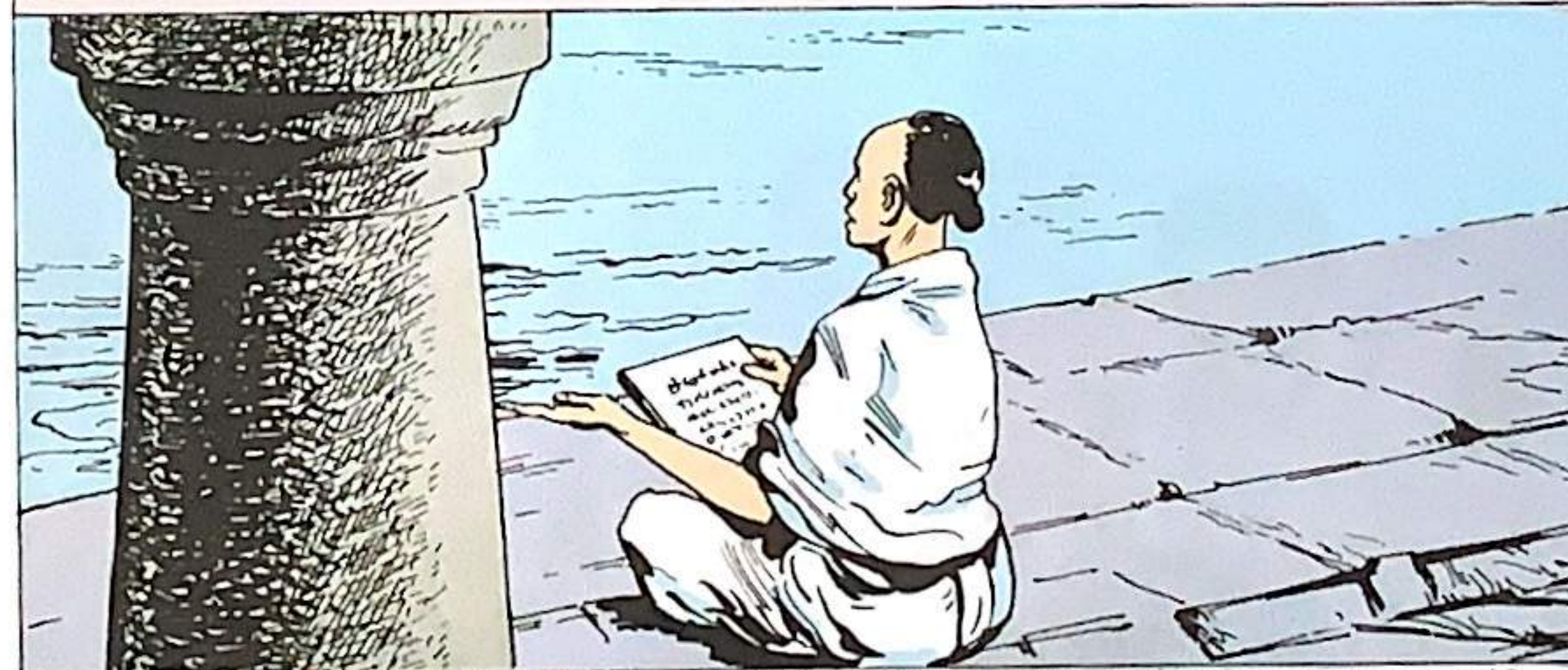
AND YOU, BEING A SCHOLAR OF TELUGU AND SANSKRIT, TAKE CARE OF THE SAHITYA*.



AS SOON AS TYAGARAJA HAD SUNG THE 'PALLAVI' OF A COMPOSITION THE FIRST DISCIPLE WOULD QUICKLY TAKE IT DOWN IN NOTATION.

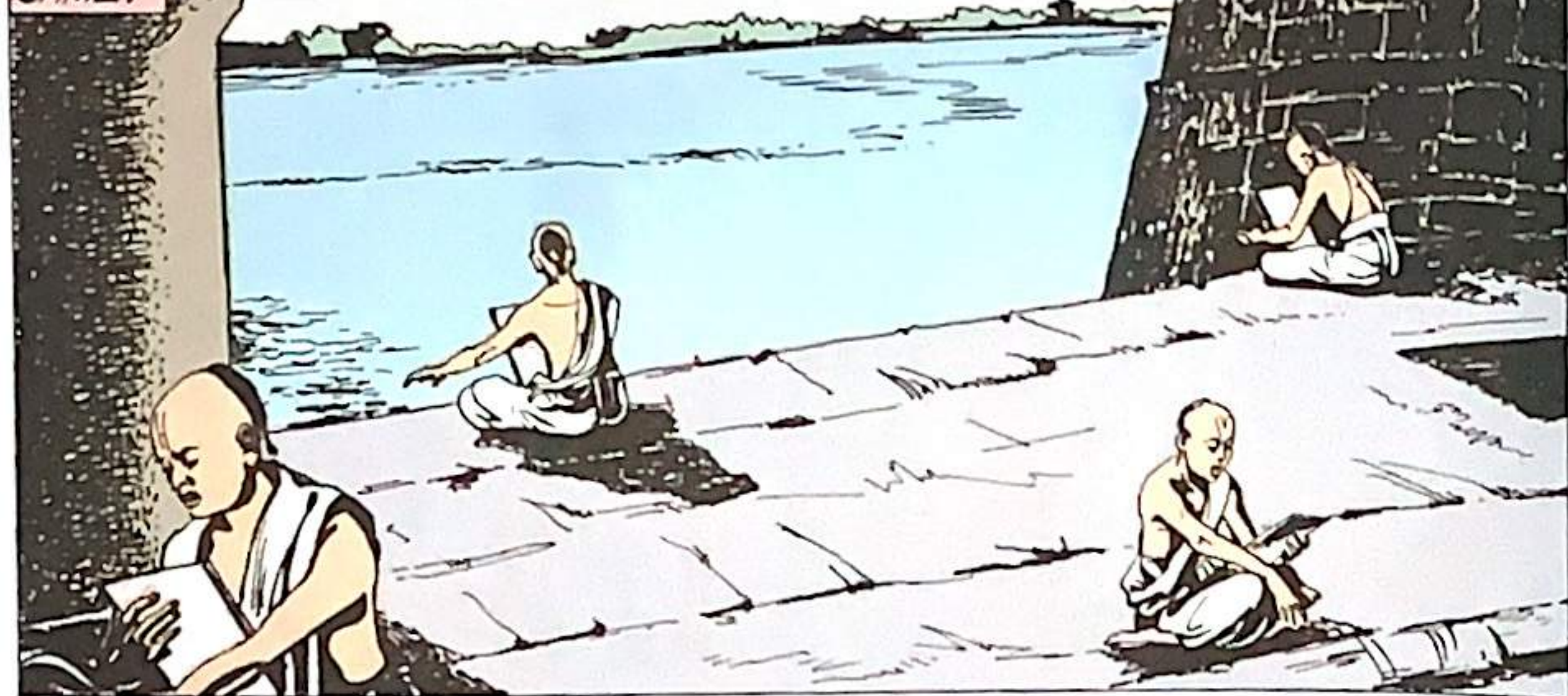
I MUST GO AWAY AND PRACTISE IT.

HE WOULD RUN TO THE BANKS OF THE RIVER KAVERI AND MEMORISE IT.

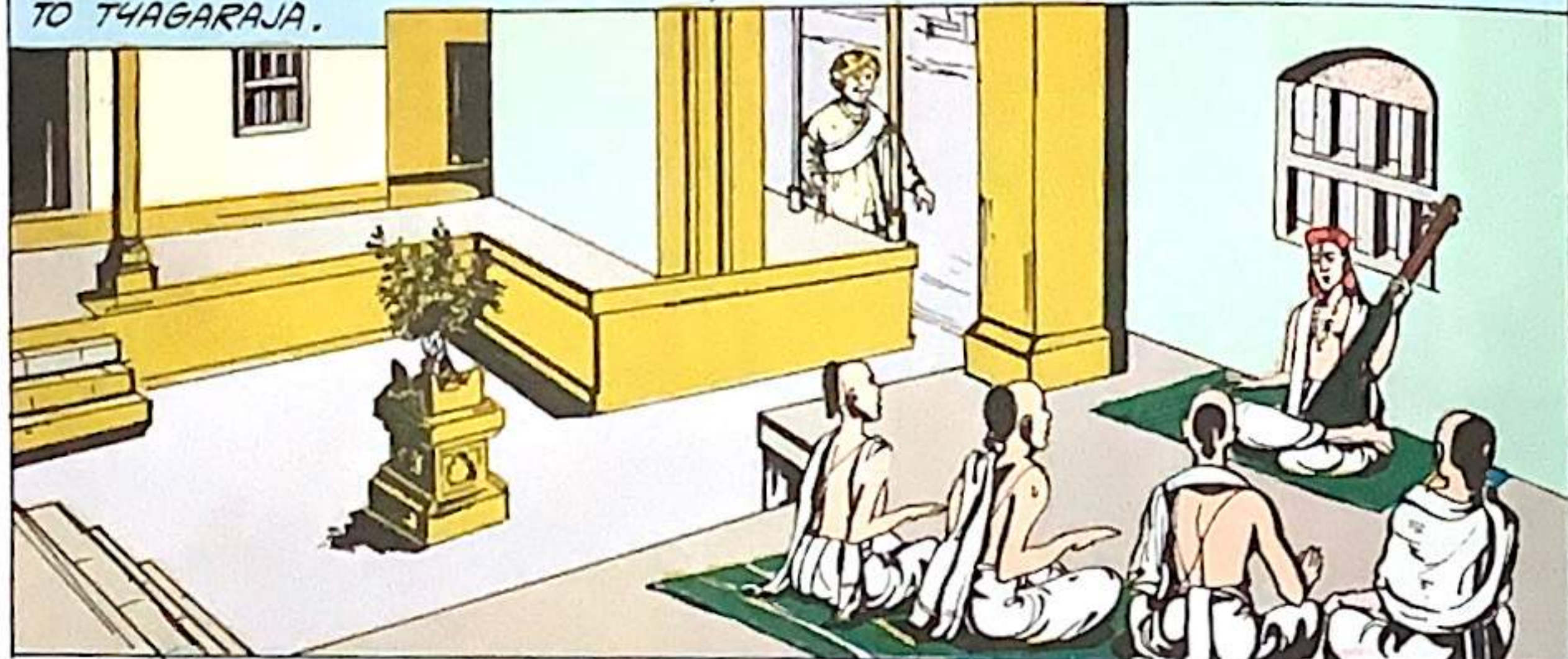


* THE THREE SEQUENCES OF A COMPOSITION + THE WORDS OF THE SONG

AT THE END OF THE SEQUENCES THAT FOLLOWED, THE OTHERS WOULD DO THE SAME.



THE NEXT DAY THEY SAT TOGETHER, PRACTISED THE FULL PIECE AND SANG IT TO THAGARAJA.



THANK YOU! THANK YOU FOR ENABLING ME TO HEAR MY OWN COMPOSITIONS.



THAT'S NOT ENOUGH, THAGARAJA. THE CONNOISSEUR OF MUSIC MUST HEAR THEM.



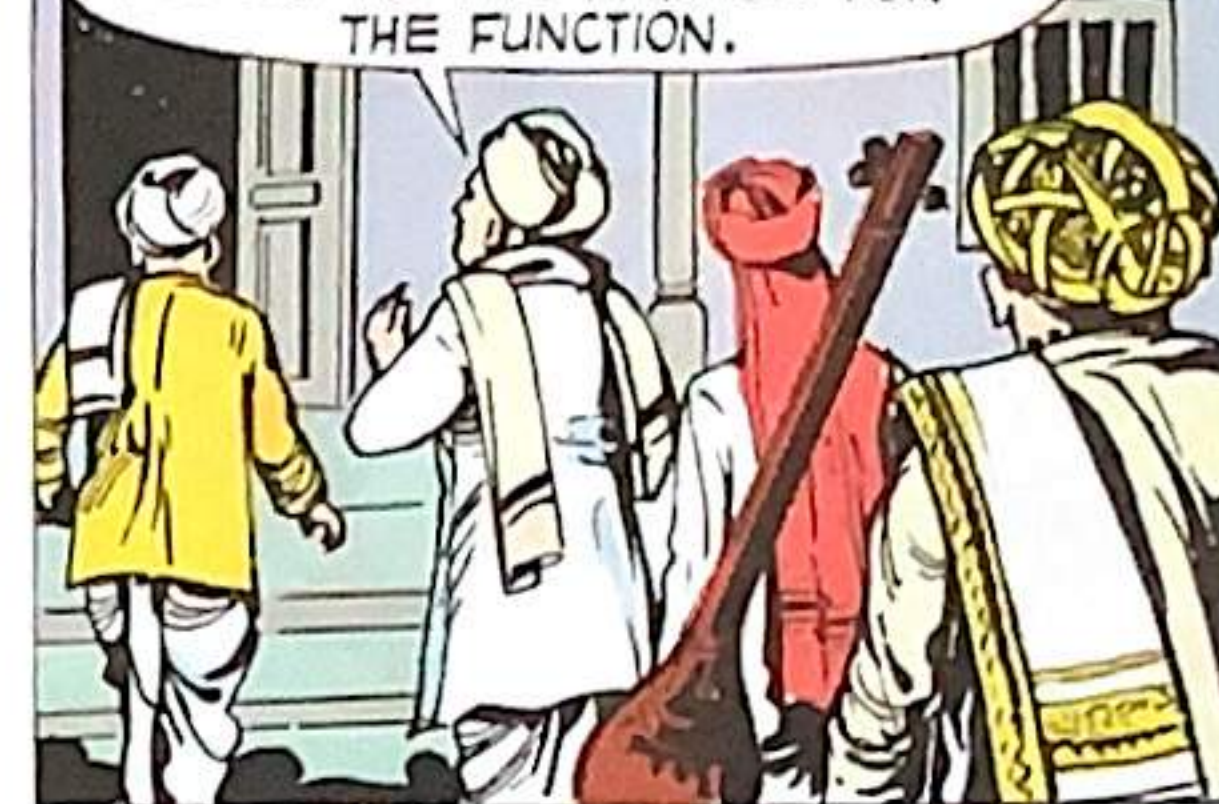
YOU MUST SING FOR MY FATHER. I AM GOING TO THANJAVUR FOR THE MUSIC FESTIVAL. WON'T YOU COME WITH ME?

TO SING FOR THE GREAT VENKATA SUBBAYYA? SIR, IT'S AN HONOUR.



ALL THE FAMOUS MUSICIANS WHO HAD REACHED THANJAVUR CAME TO SONTI VENKATA SUBBAYYA'S HOUSE.

LET US LISTEN TO YOUNG THAGARAJA FOR A WHILE BEFORE WE GO TO THE PALACE FOR THE FUNCTION.



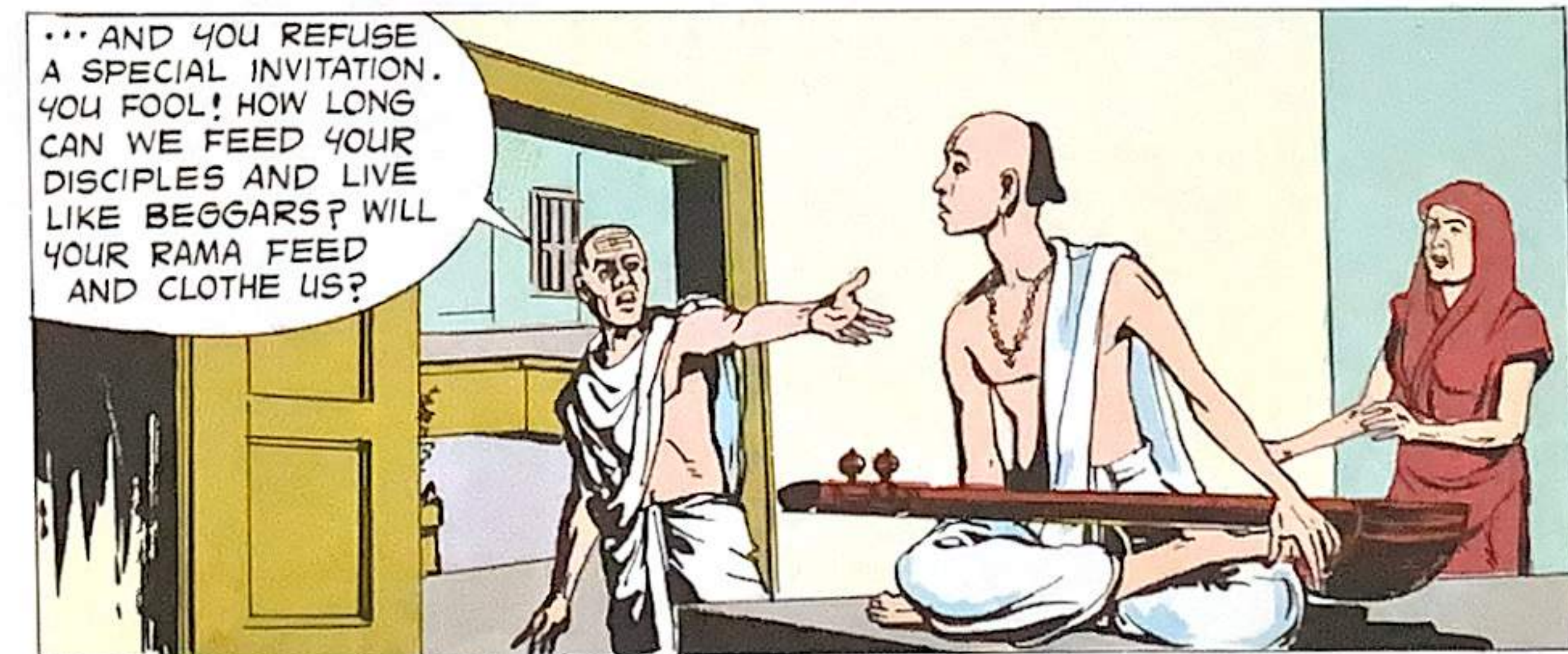
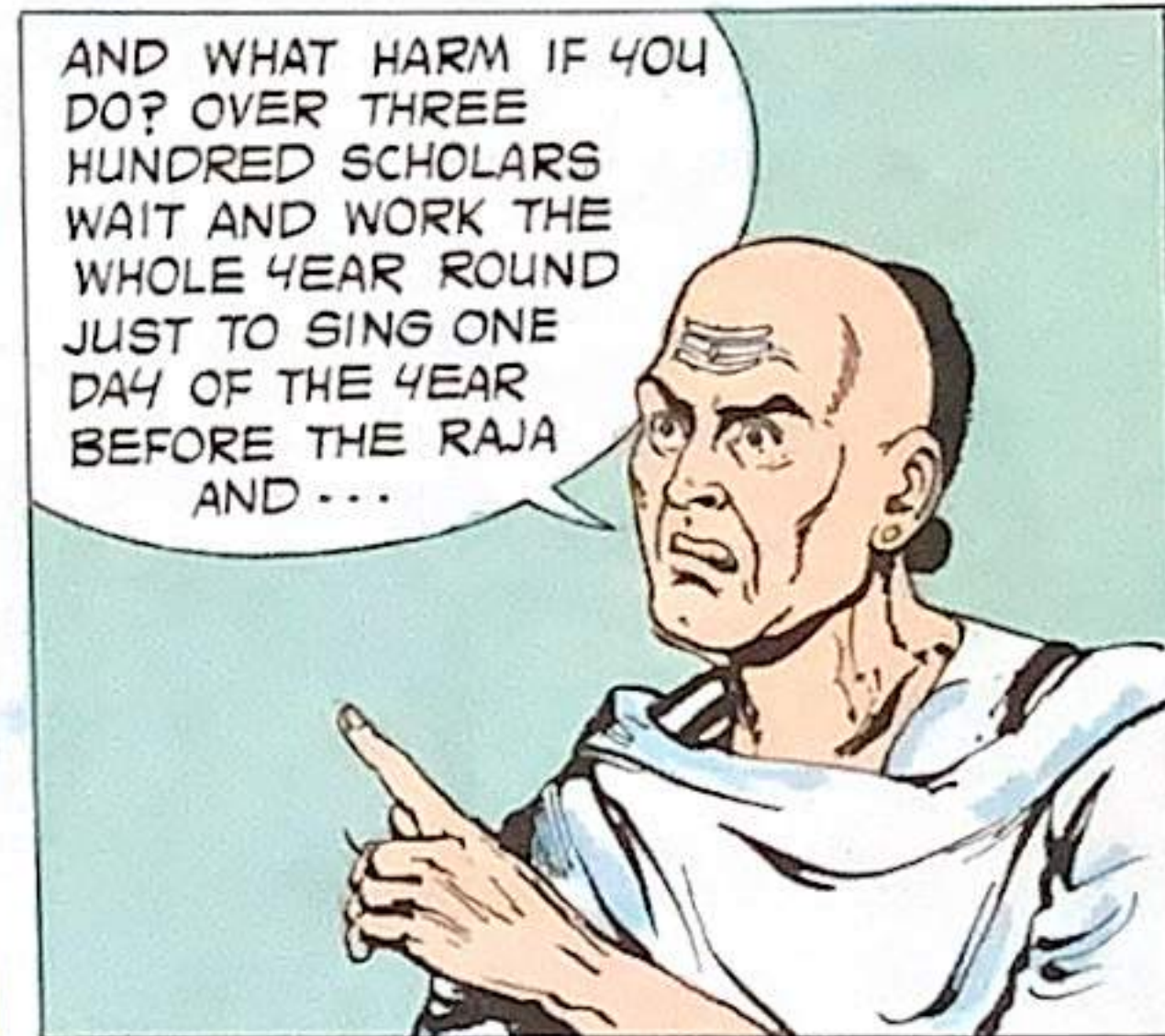
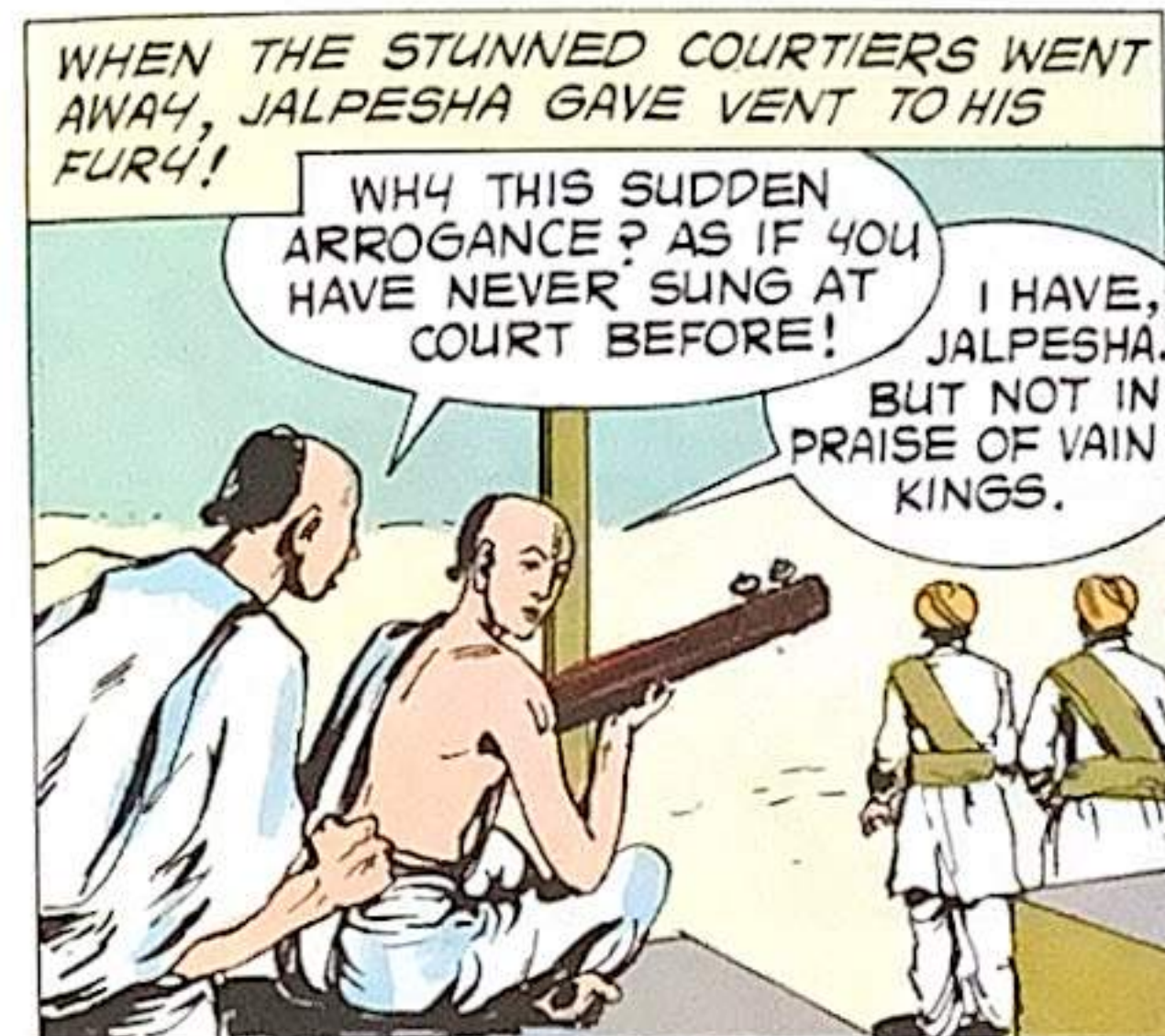
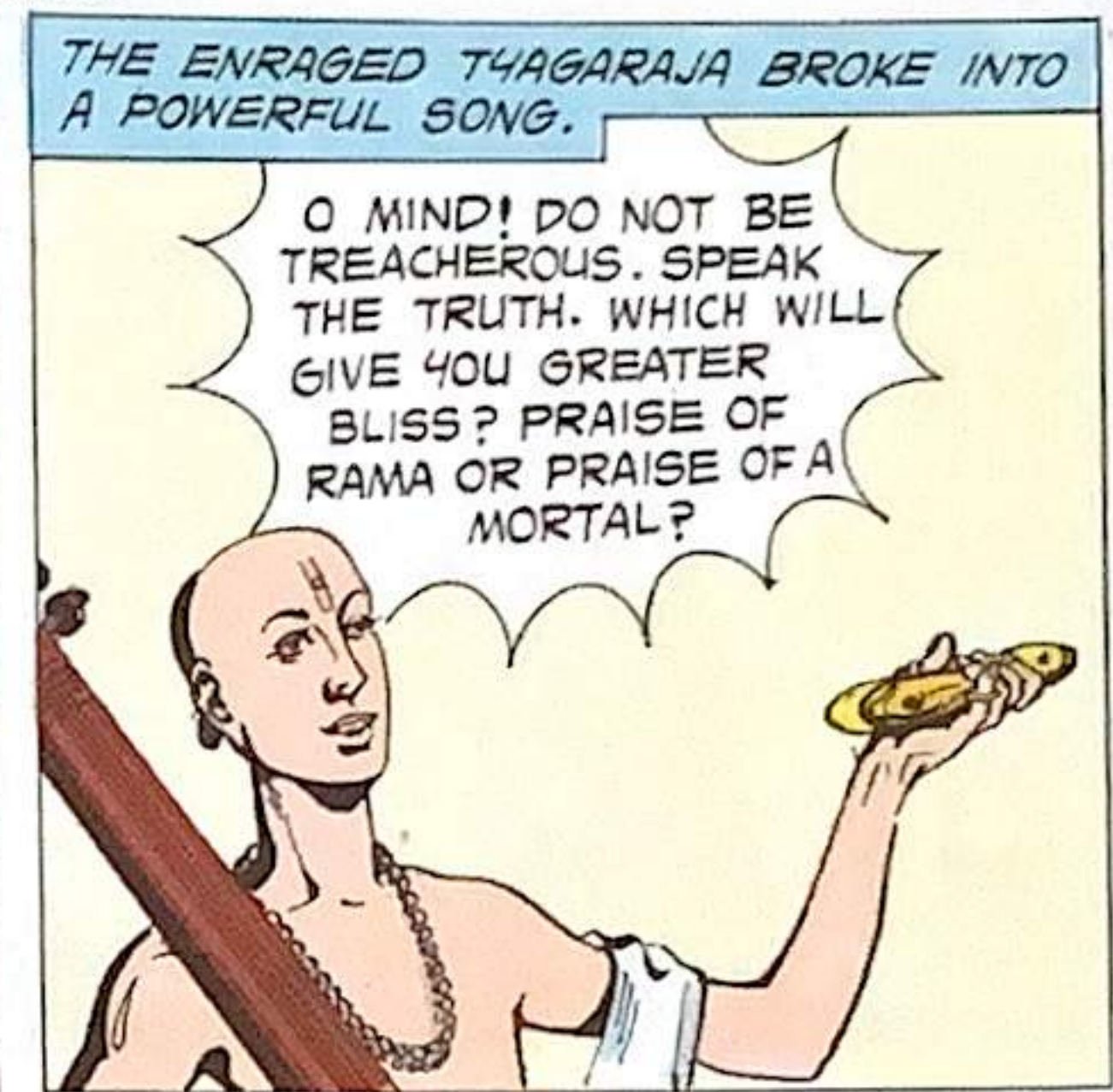
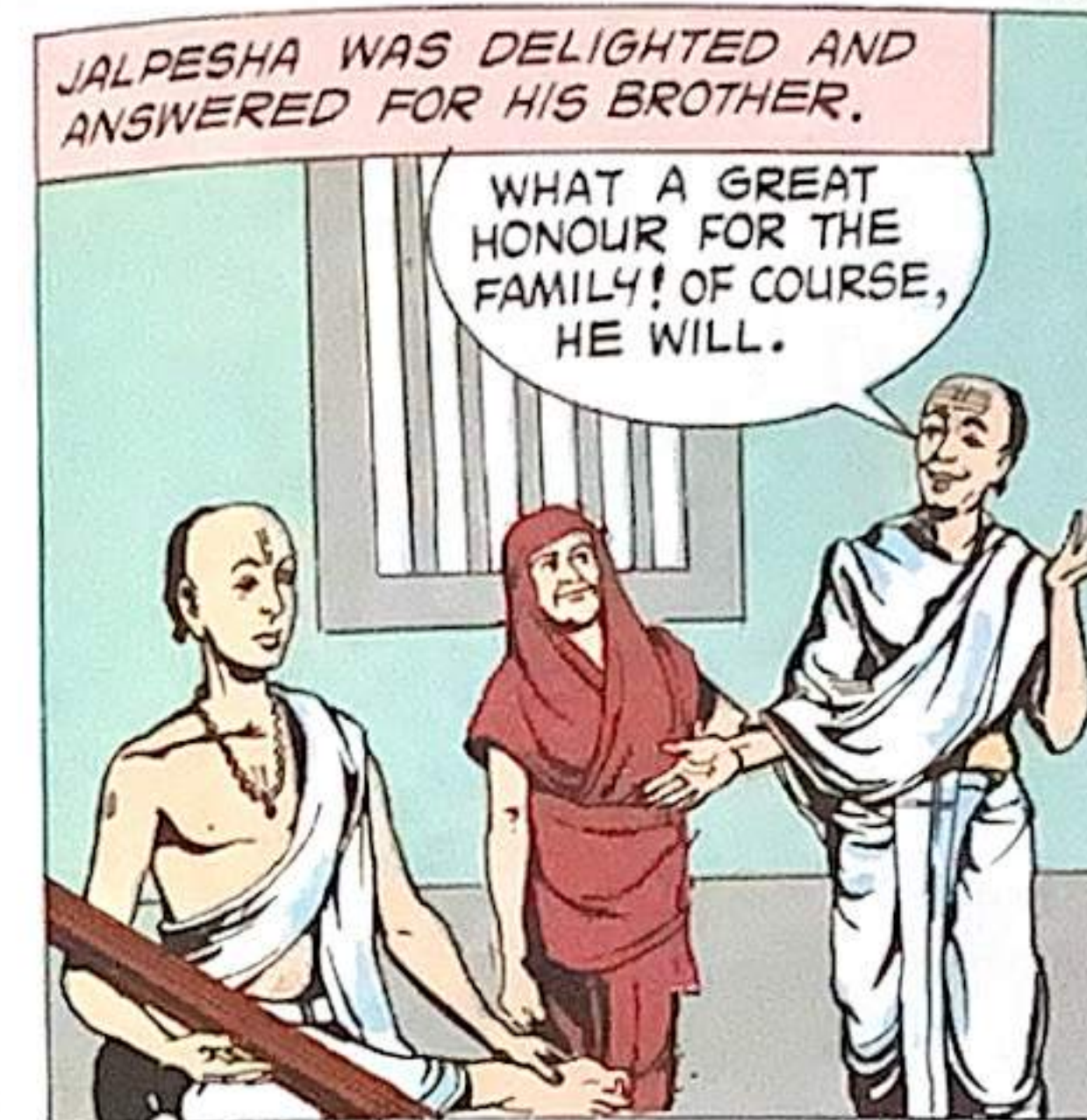
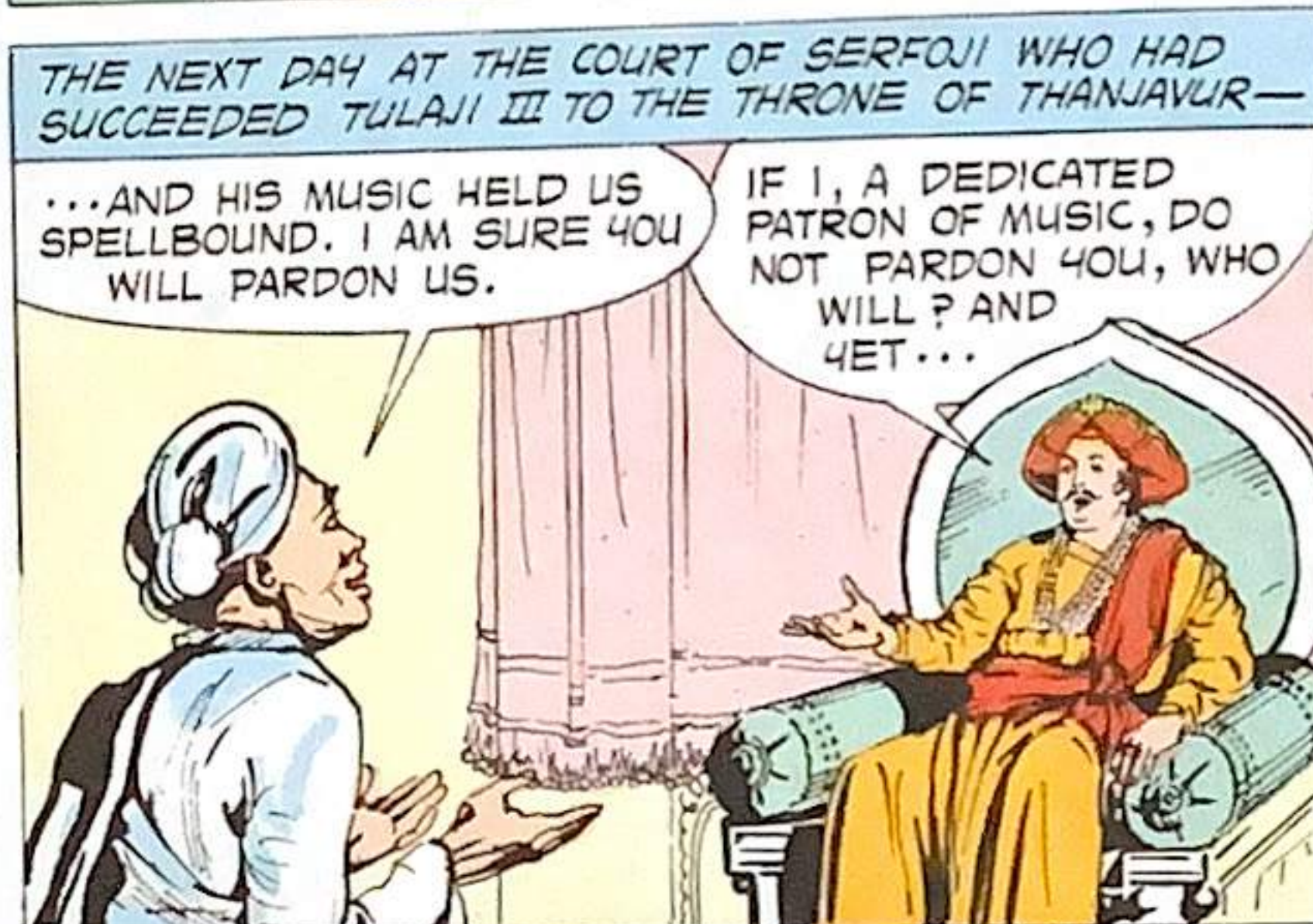
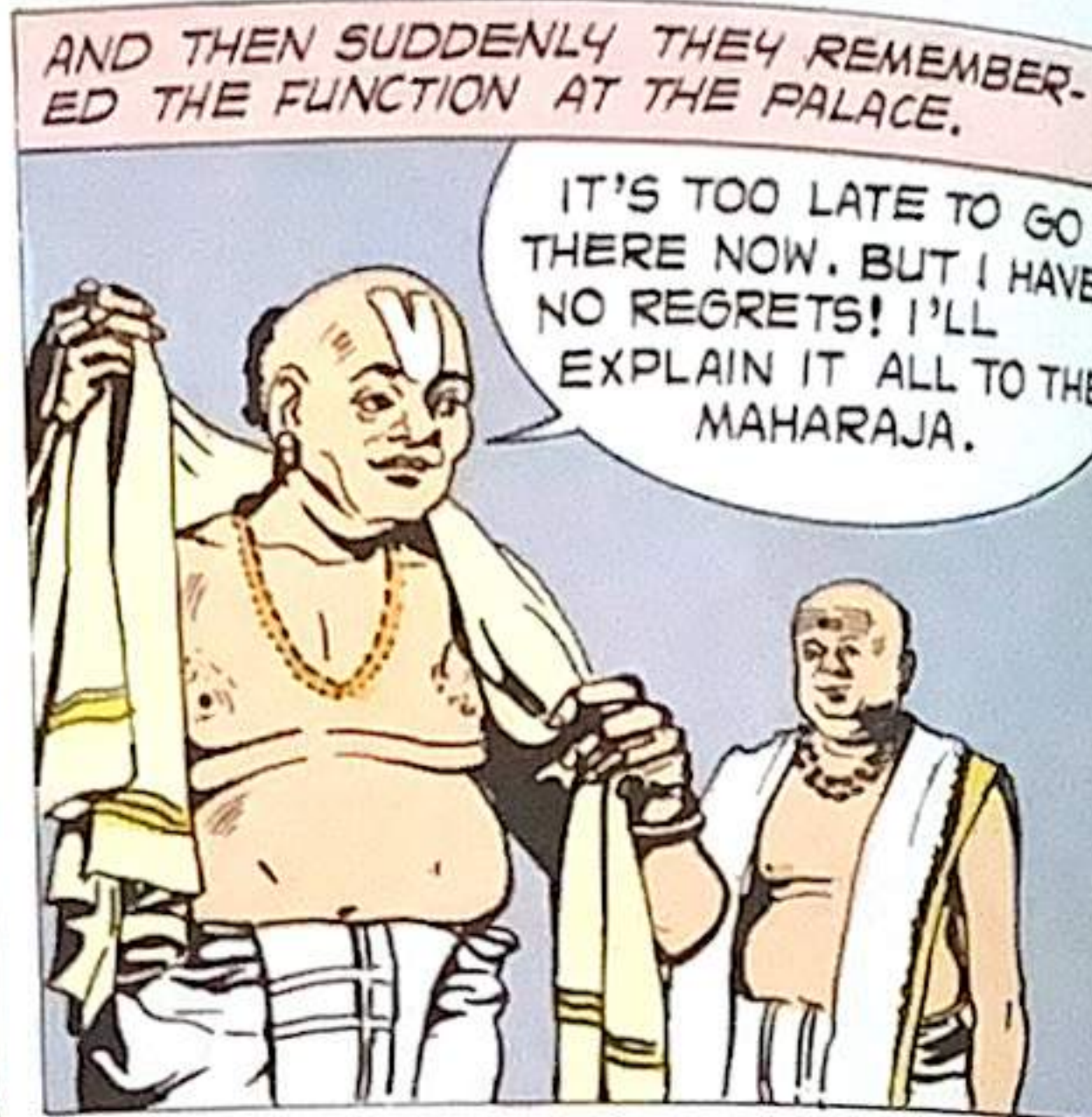
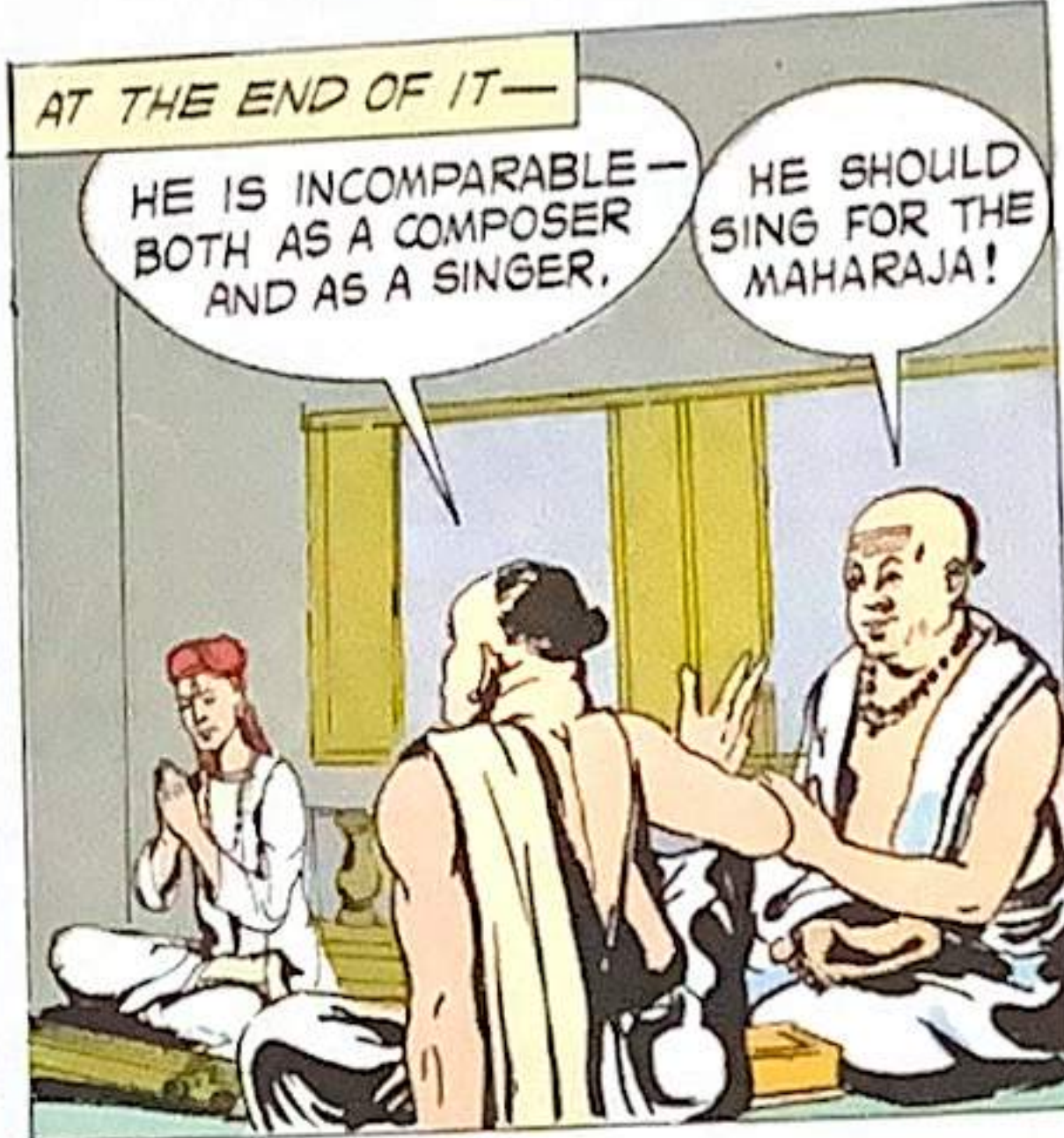
AS THAGARAJA BEGAN TO SING, THE MUSICIANS WERE ENCHANTED.

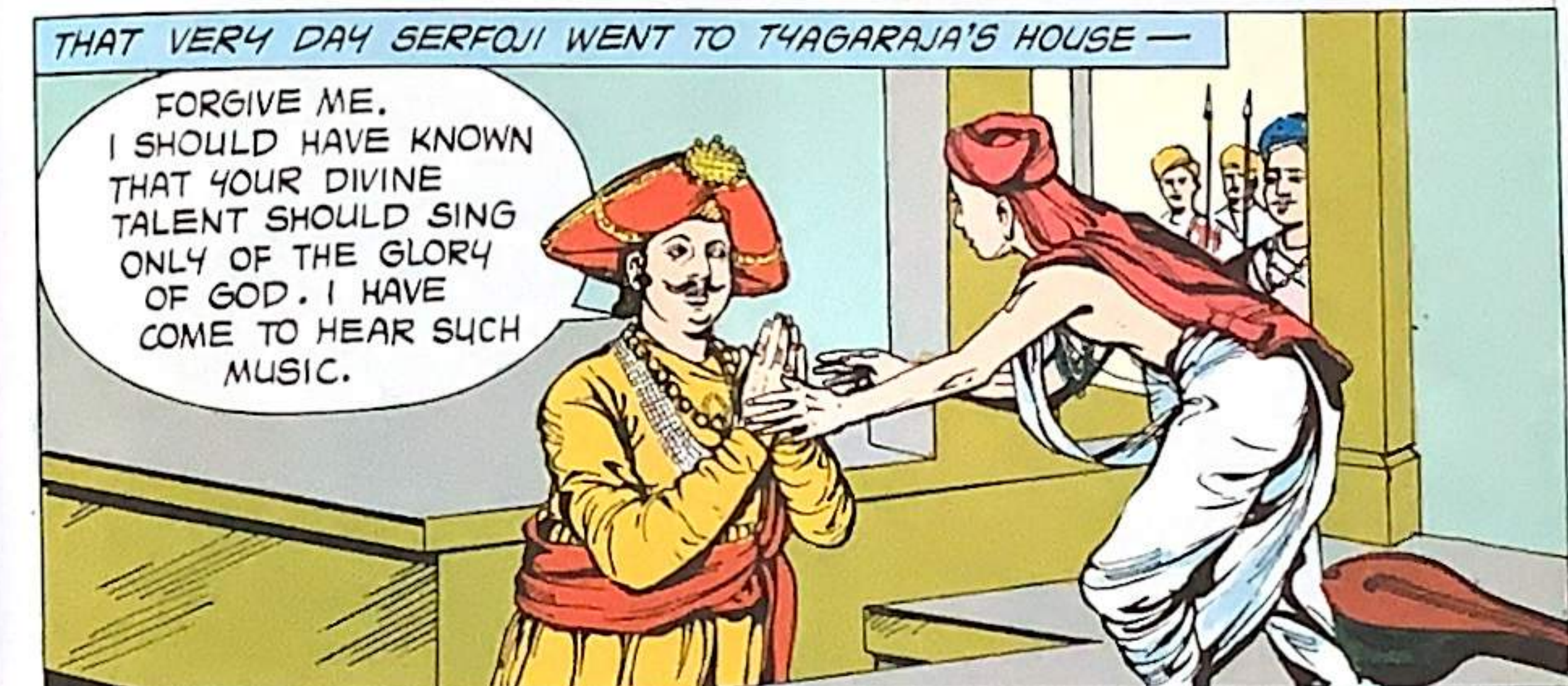
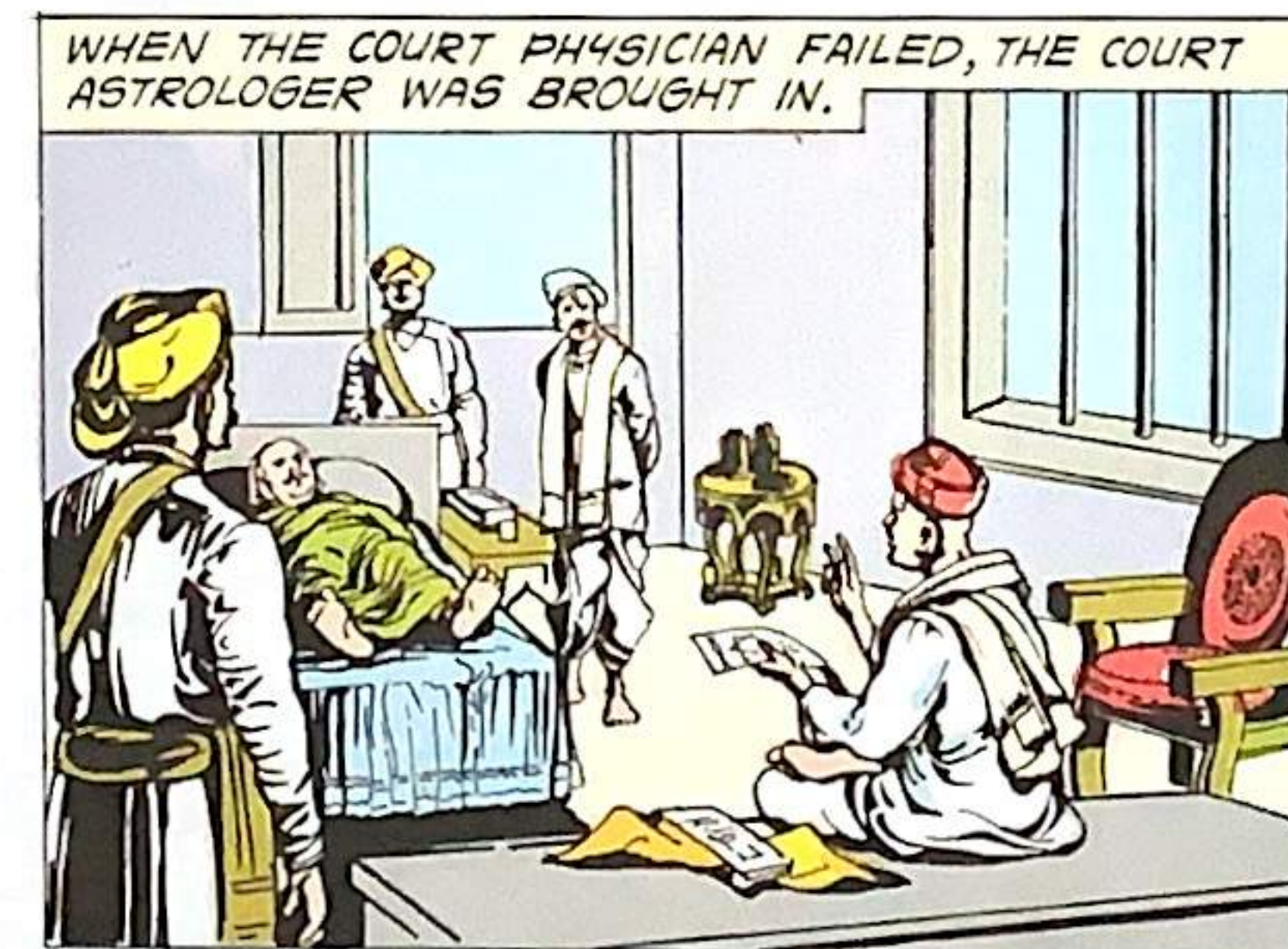
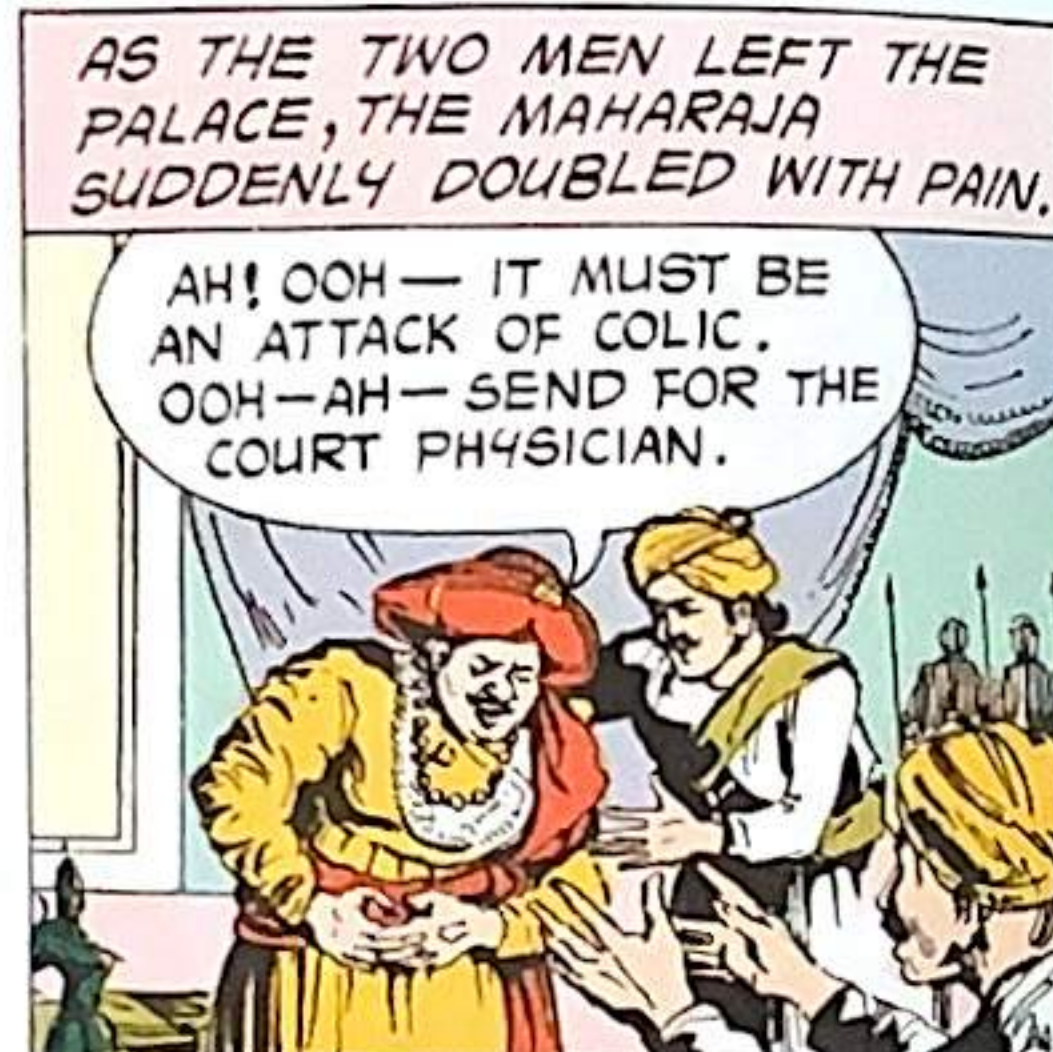
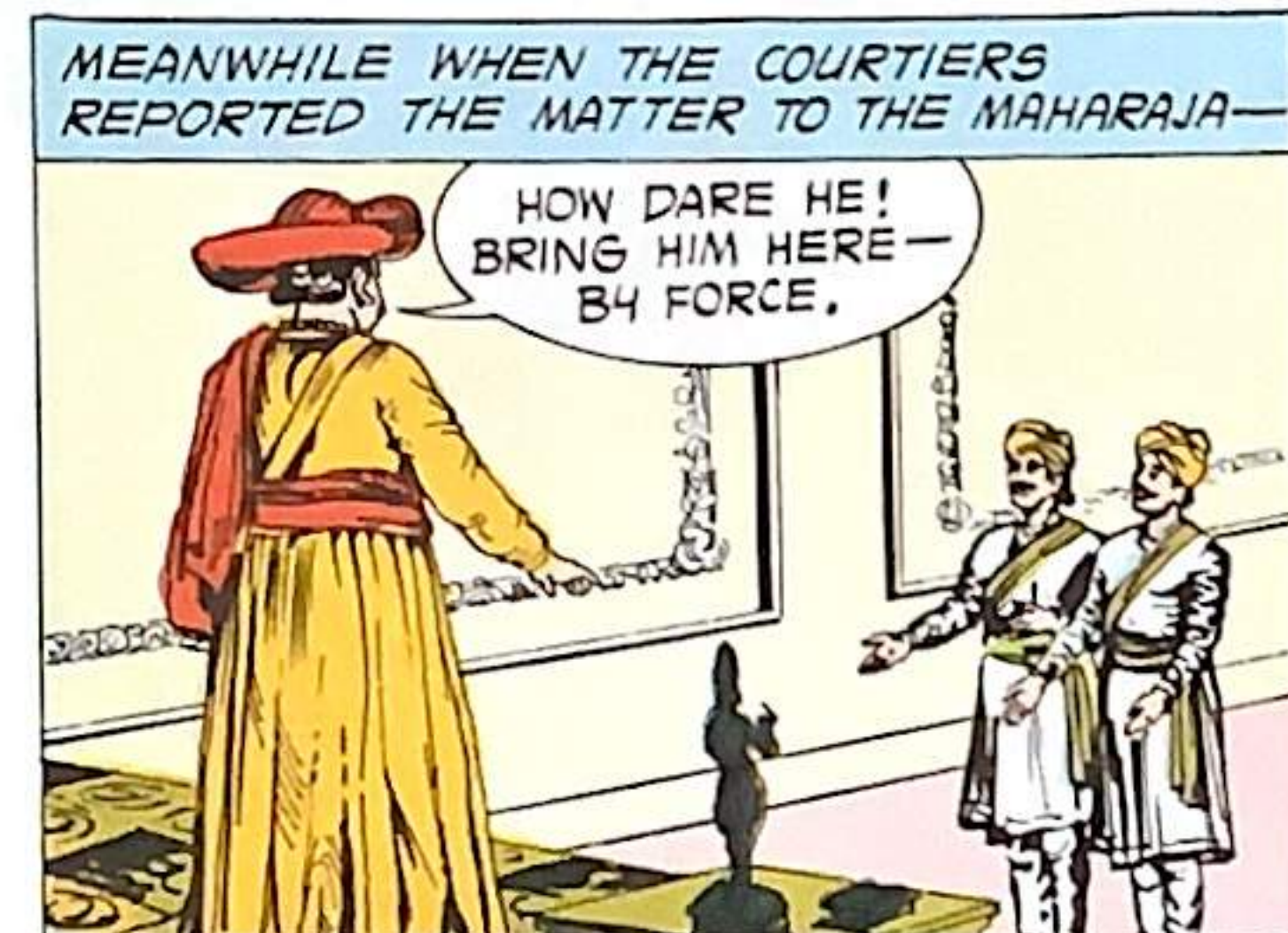
AGAIN AND AGAIN I CRY OUT FOR YOU, YET YOU REMAIN UNMOVED...

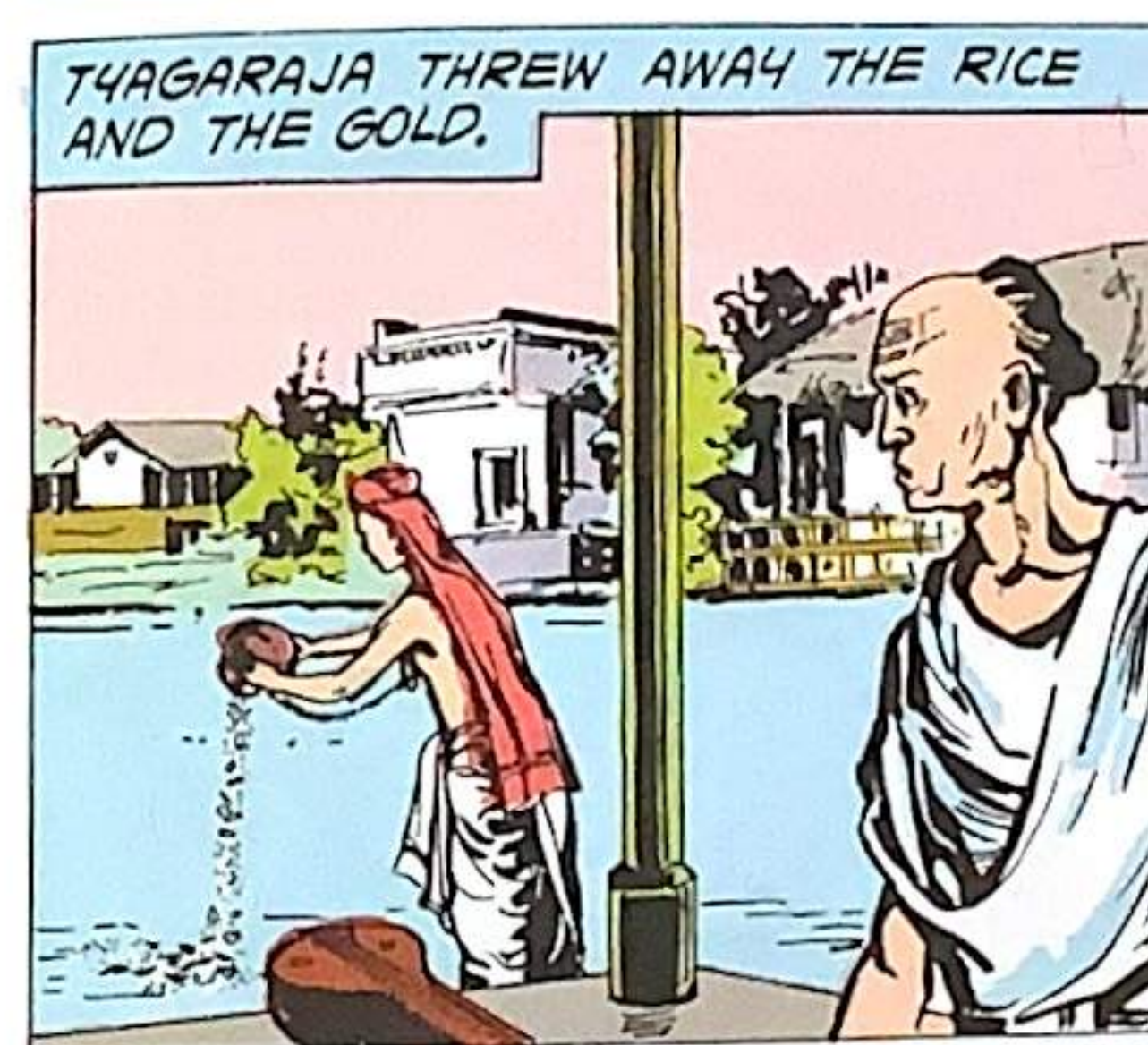
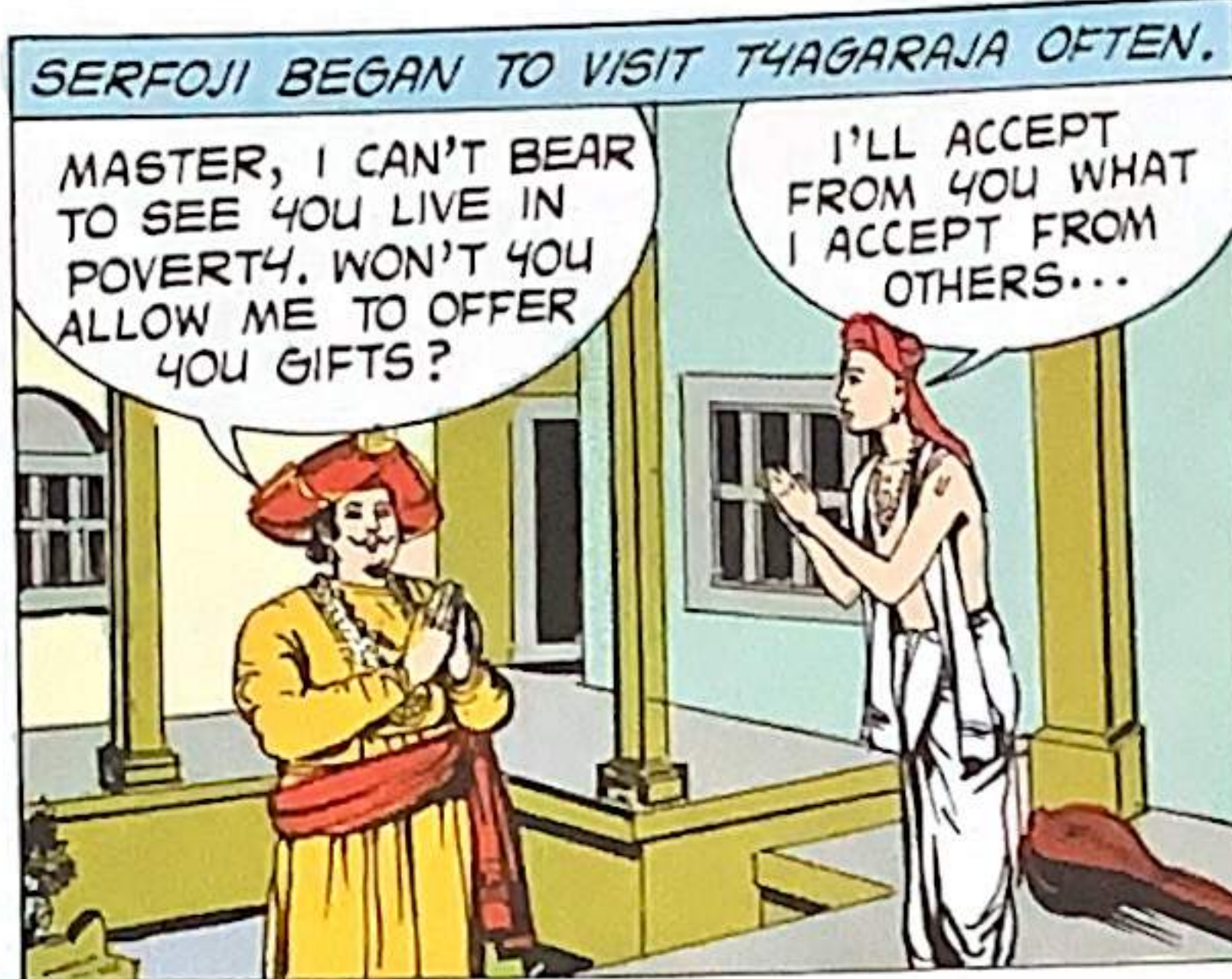


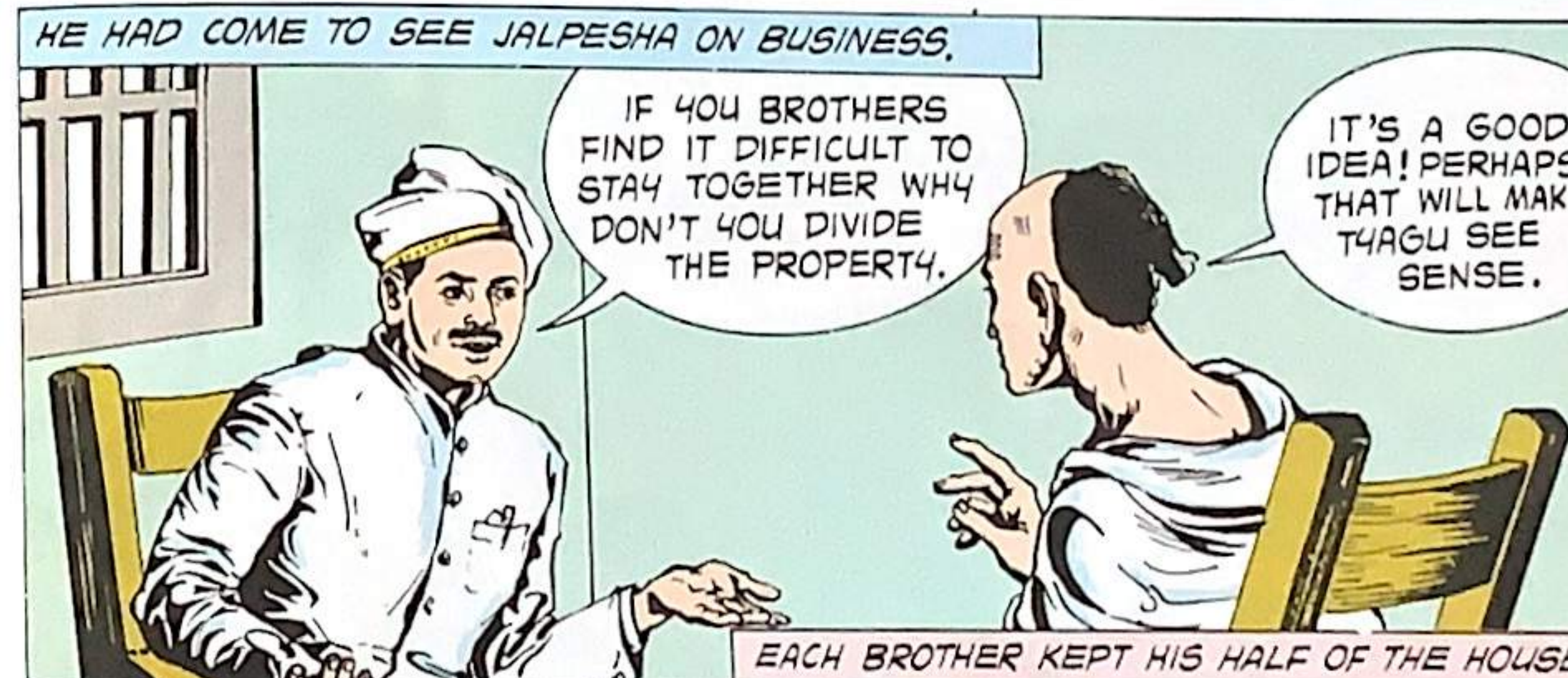
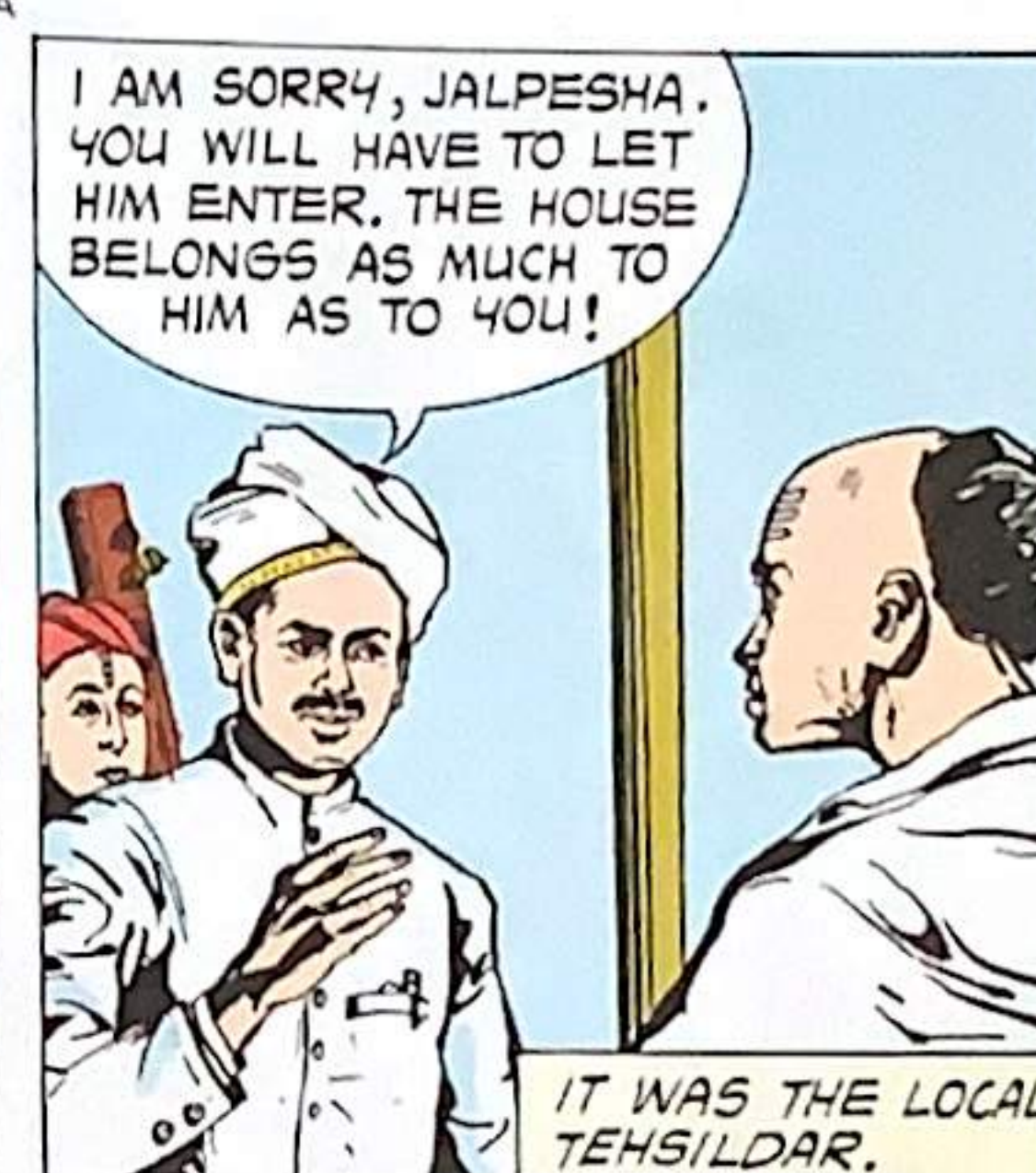
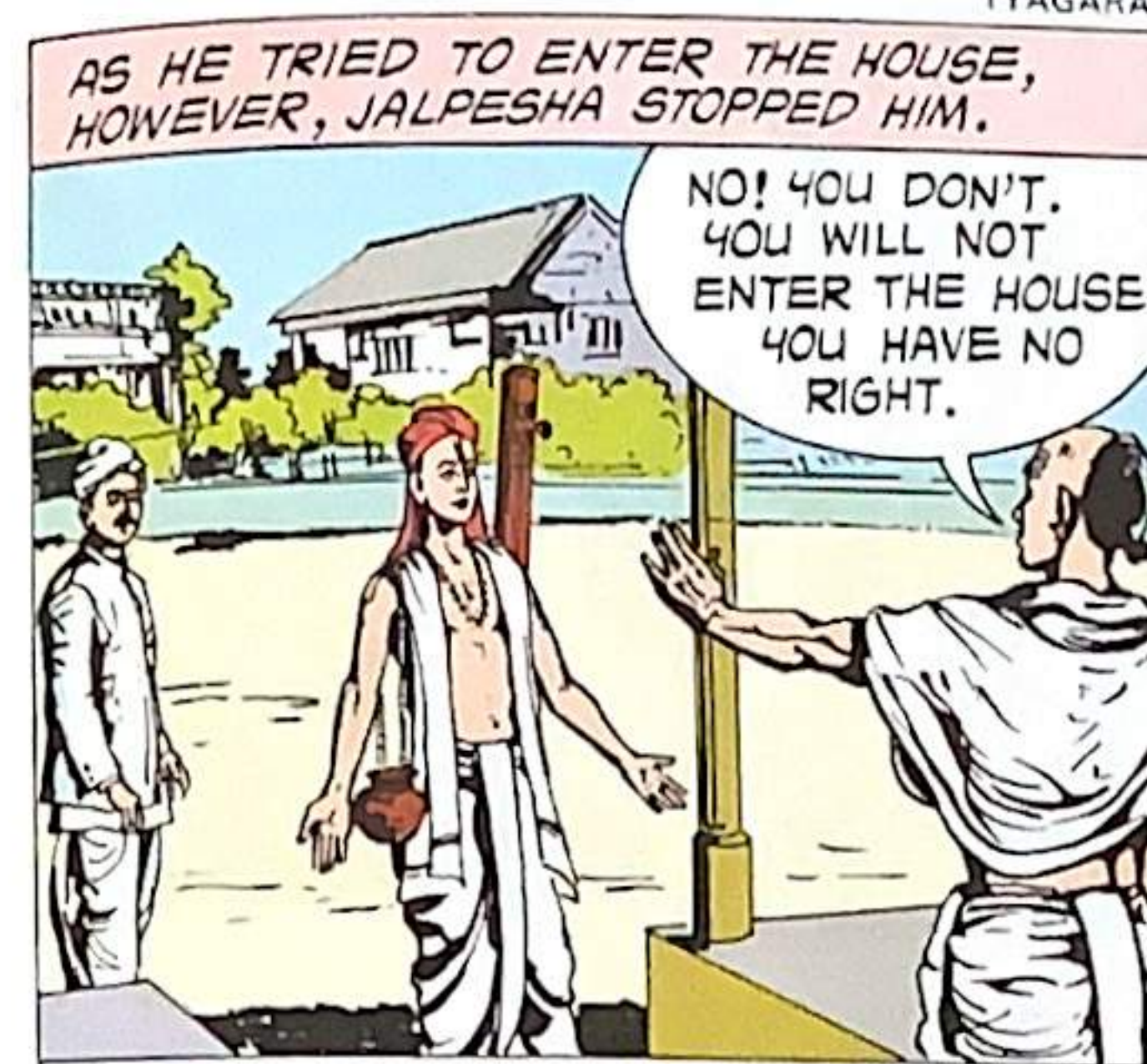
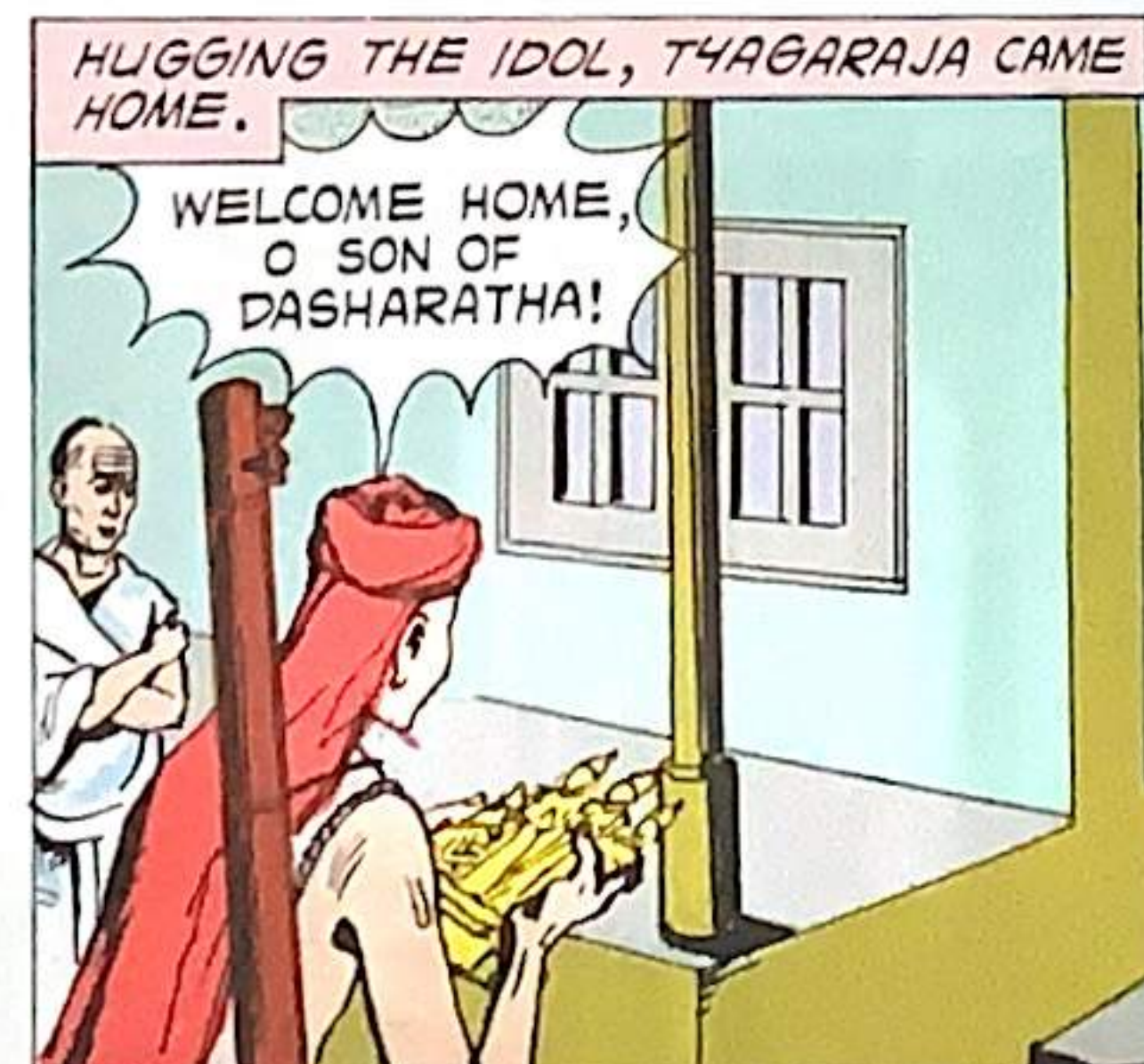
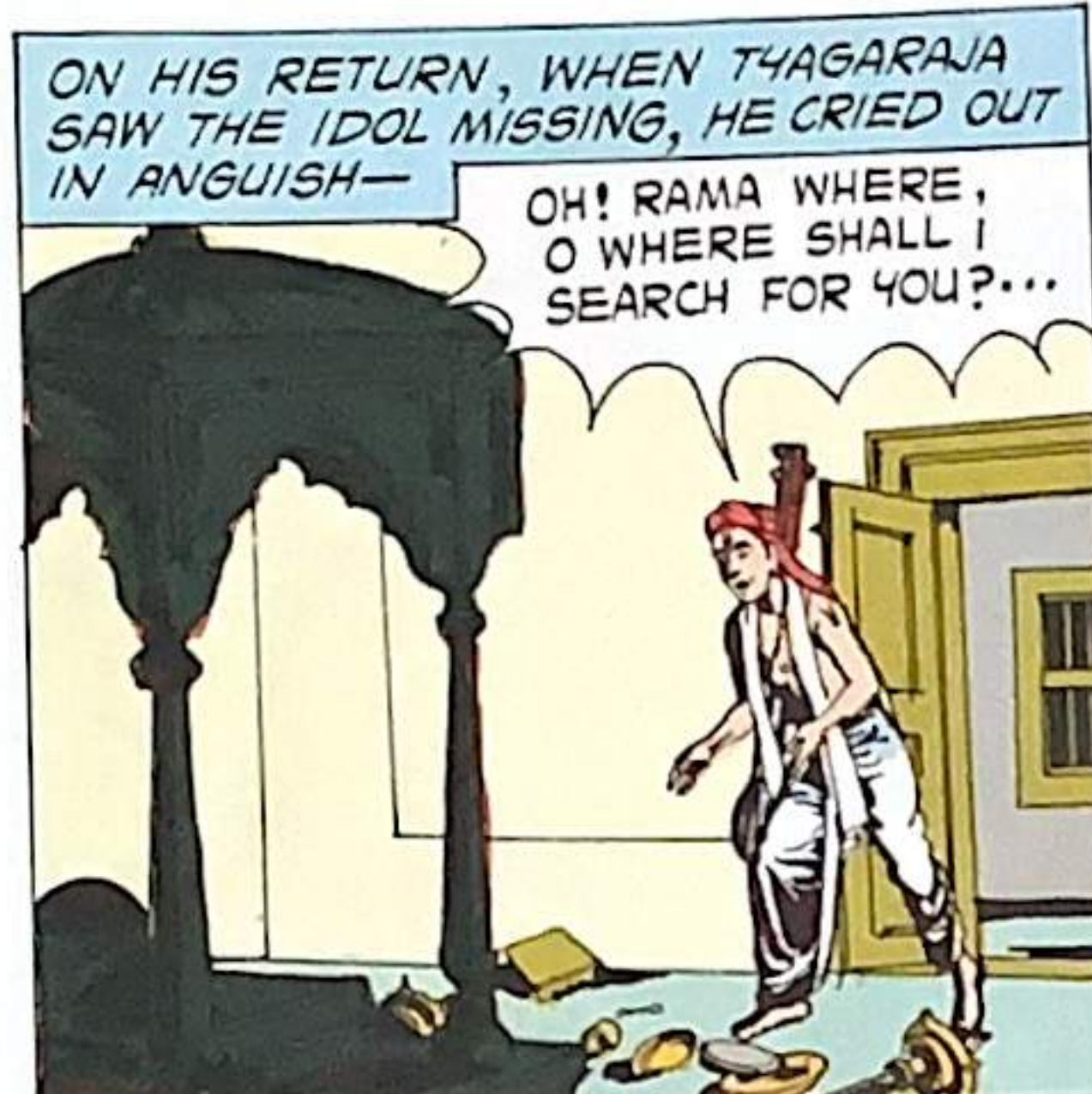
HOURS WENT BY. ONE...TWO...EIGHT! THE MUSICIANS FORGOT ALL ABOUT THE FUNCTION AT THE PALACE.

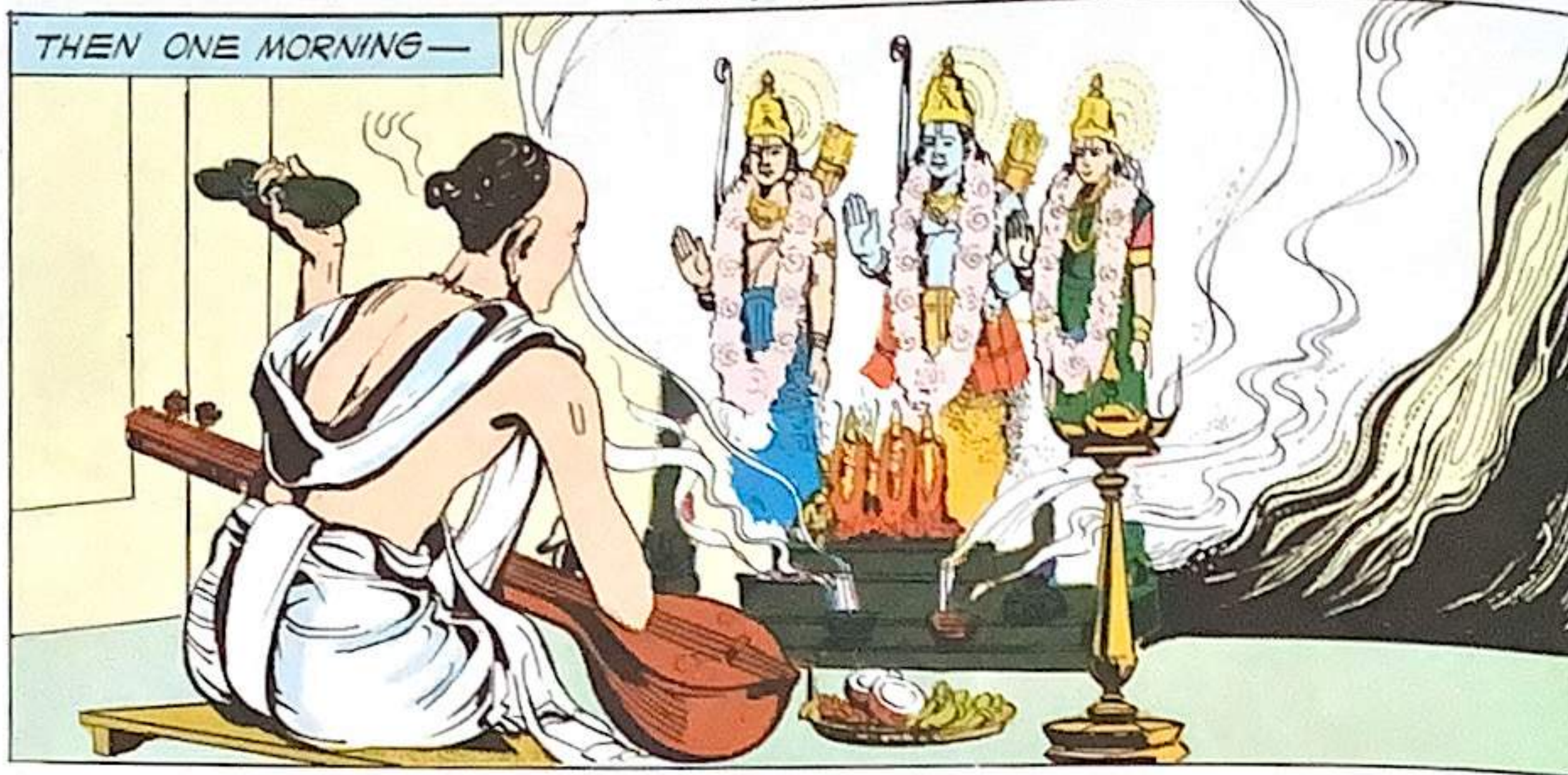




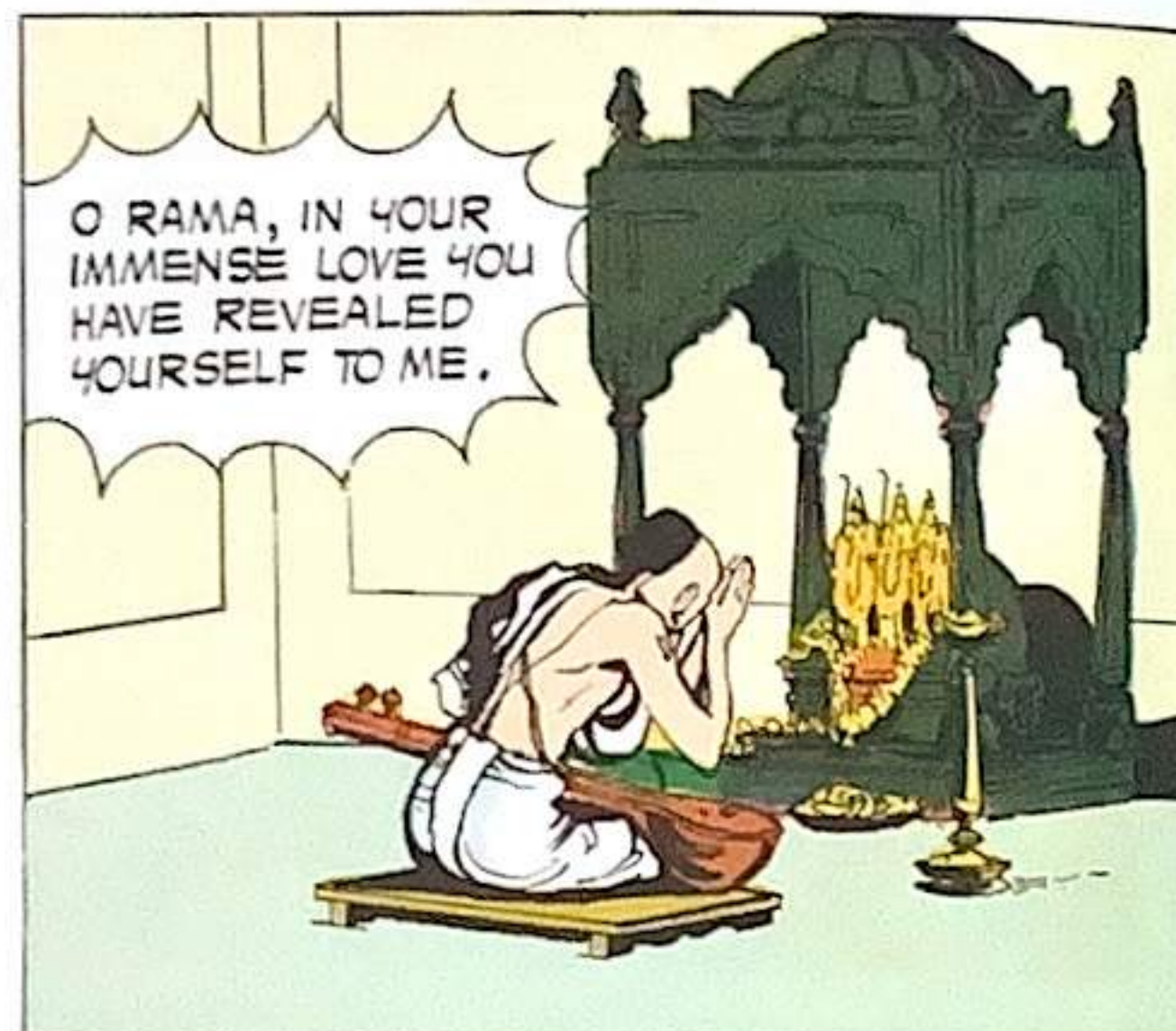








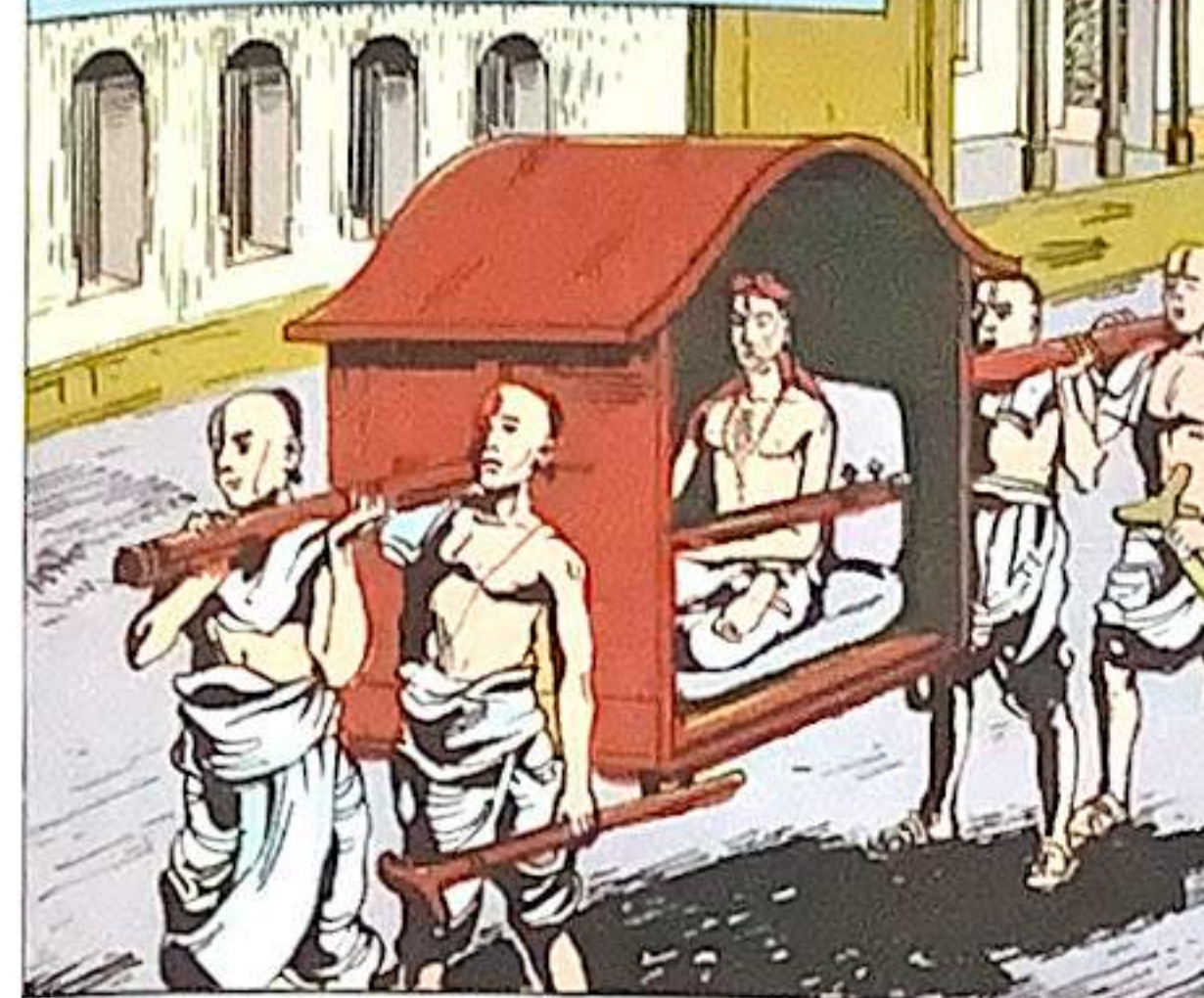
TYAGARAJA COULD NOT CONTAIN HIS ECSTASY.



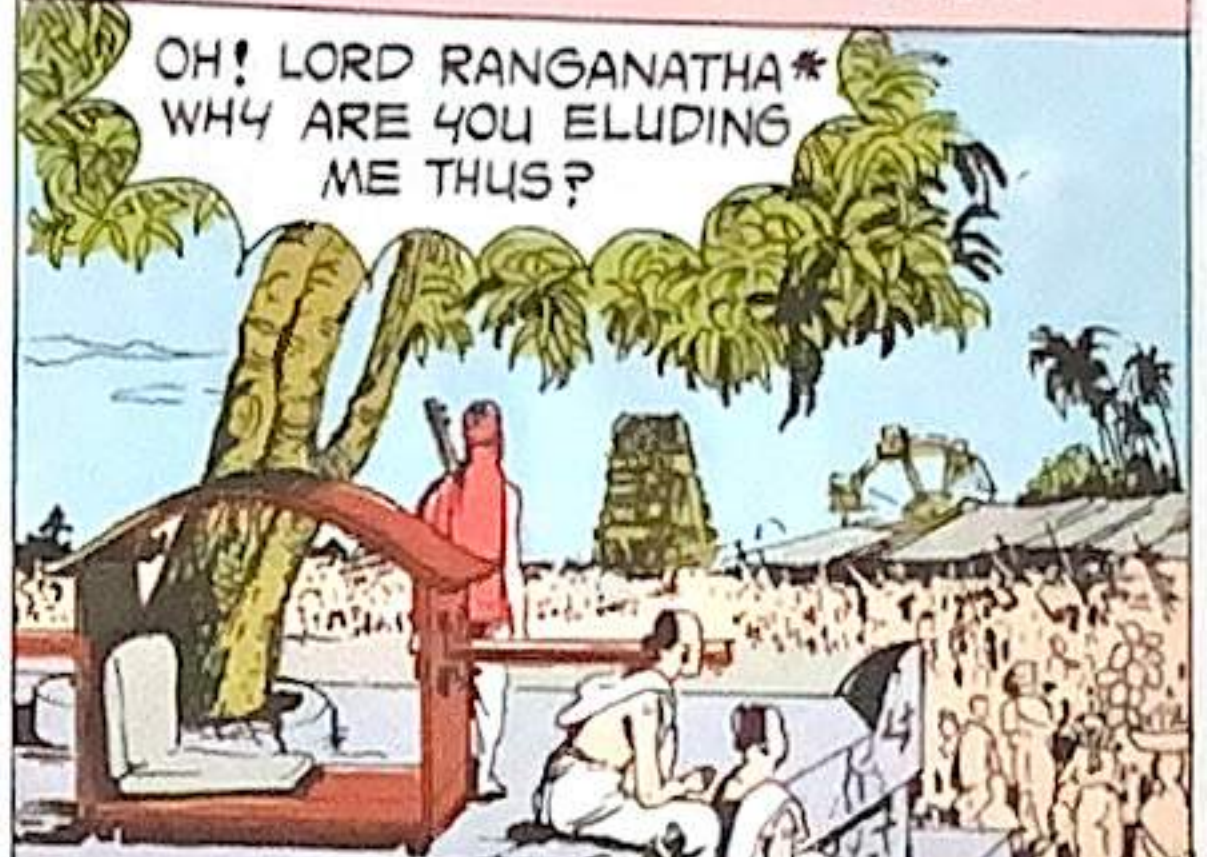
AS THE YEARS WENT BY, HIS COMPOSITIONS POURED FORTH IN THEIR HUNDREDS.



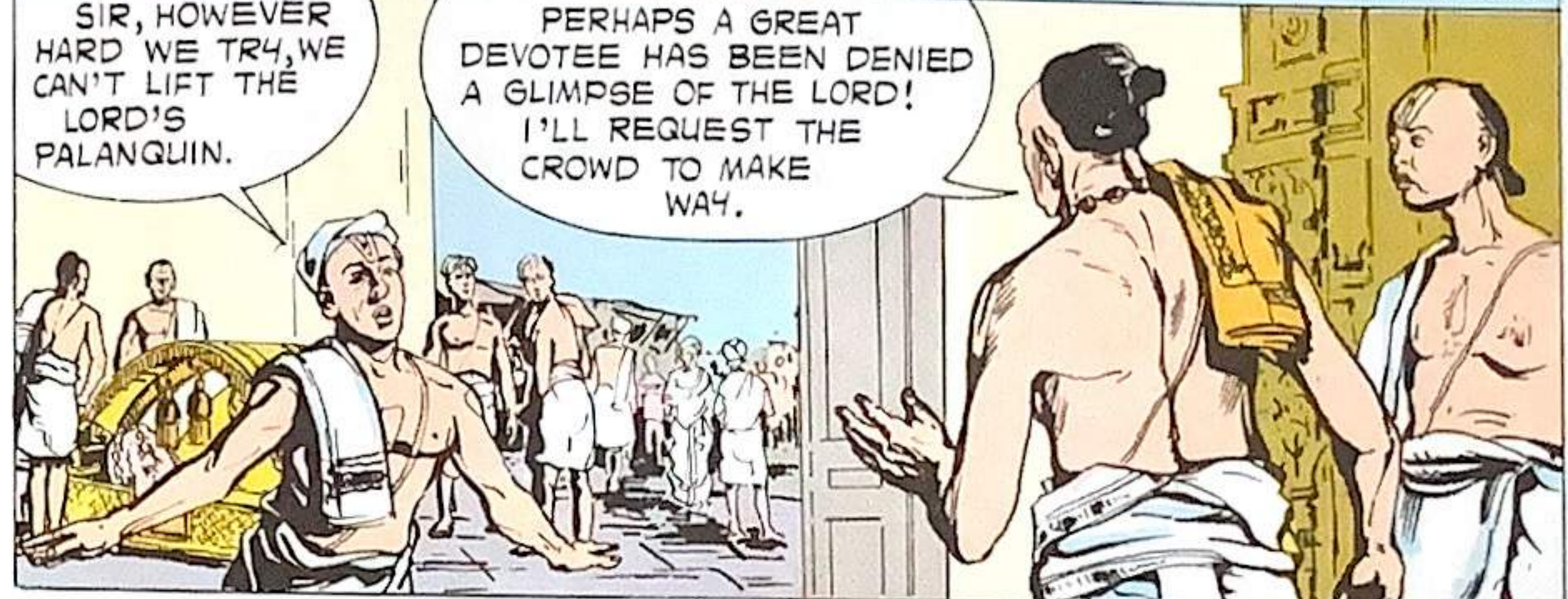
WHILE IN HIS SEVENTIES, TYAGARAJA SET OUT ON A PILGRIMAGE.



HE REACHED SRIRANGAM, THE ABODE OF LORD RANGANATHA. TYAGARAJA WAS DENIED A GLIMPSE OF THE DEITY BY THE MILLING FESTIVAL CROWD.

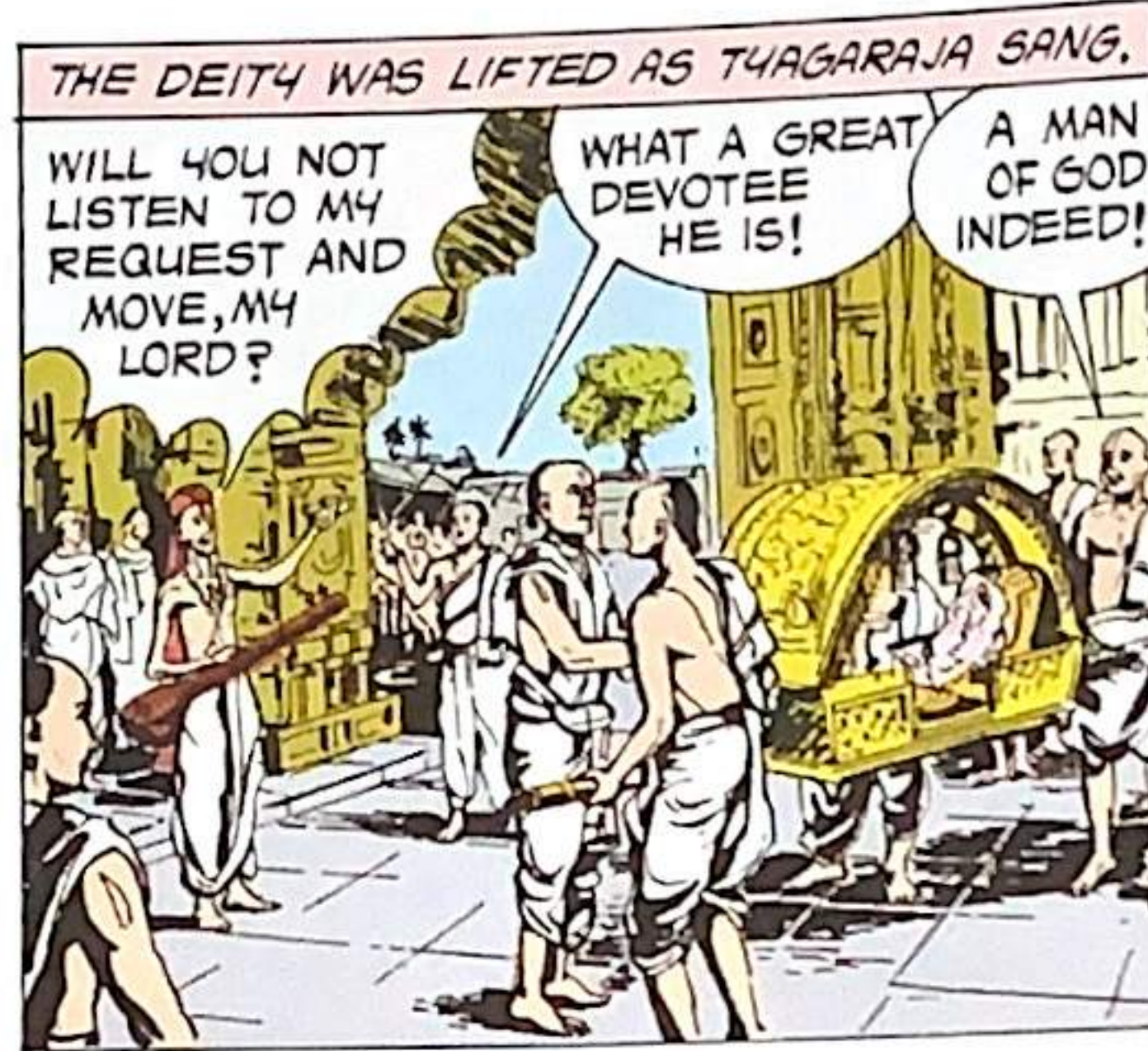


JUST THEN A BEARER OF THE SACRED PALANQUIN RUSHED TO THE CHIEF PRIEST.



AS THE CROWD MADE WAY—





THE DEITY WAS LIFTED AS TYAGARAJA SANG.

WILL YOU NOT LISTEN TO MY REQUEST AND MOVE, MY LORD?

WHAT A GREAT DEVOTEE HE IS!

A MAN OF GOD INDEED!



AT KANCHI HE CALLED ON SAINT UPANISHAD BRAHMA YOGI.

WELCOME TO MY HUMBLE ABODE, TYAGARAJA. I HAVE BEEN LONGING TO HEAR YOU SING ON VARADARAJA.



AND TYAGARAJA SANG.

O VARADARAJA ... I HAVE COME HERE SEEKING YOU...



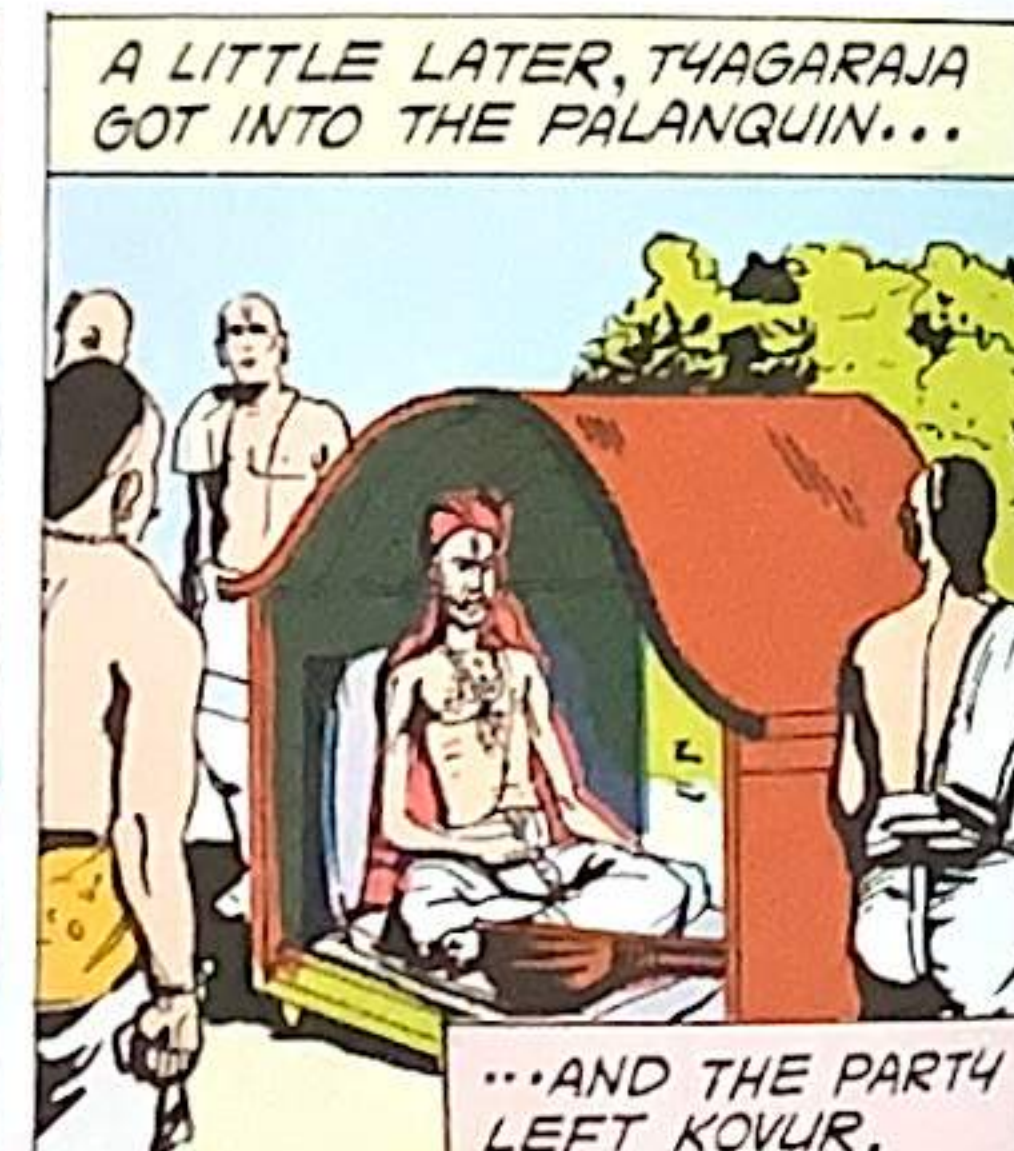
TYAGARAJA VISITED TIRUPATI AND LATER WENT TO KOVUR WHERE HE STAYED FOR A FEW DAYS, AS THE GUEST OF SUNDARESA MUDALIAR, AND SANG AT THE TEMPLE OF KOVUR.

SHAMBHO MAHADEVA, SHANKARA GIRIJARAMANA...



A FEW DAYS LATER AS THE PARTY WAS READY TO LEAVE KOVUR, SUNDARESA MUDALIAR SLIPPED A THOUSAND GOLD PIECES INTO TYAGARAJA'S PALANQUIN.

THIS MONEY IS TO BE USED FOR THE RAMANAVAMI AND SRI JAYANTI FESTIVALS. YOU MUST NOT REFUSE IT.



A LITTLE LATER, TYAGARAJA GOT INTO THE PALANQUIN...

...AND THE PARTY LEFT KOVUR.



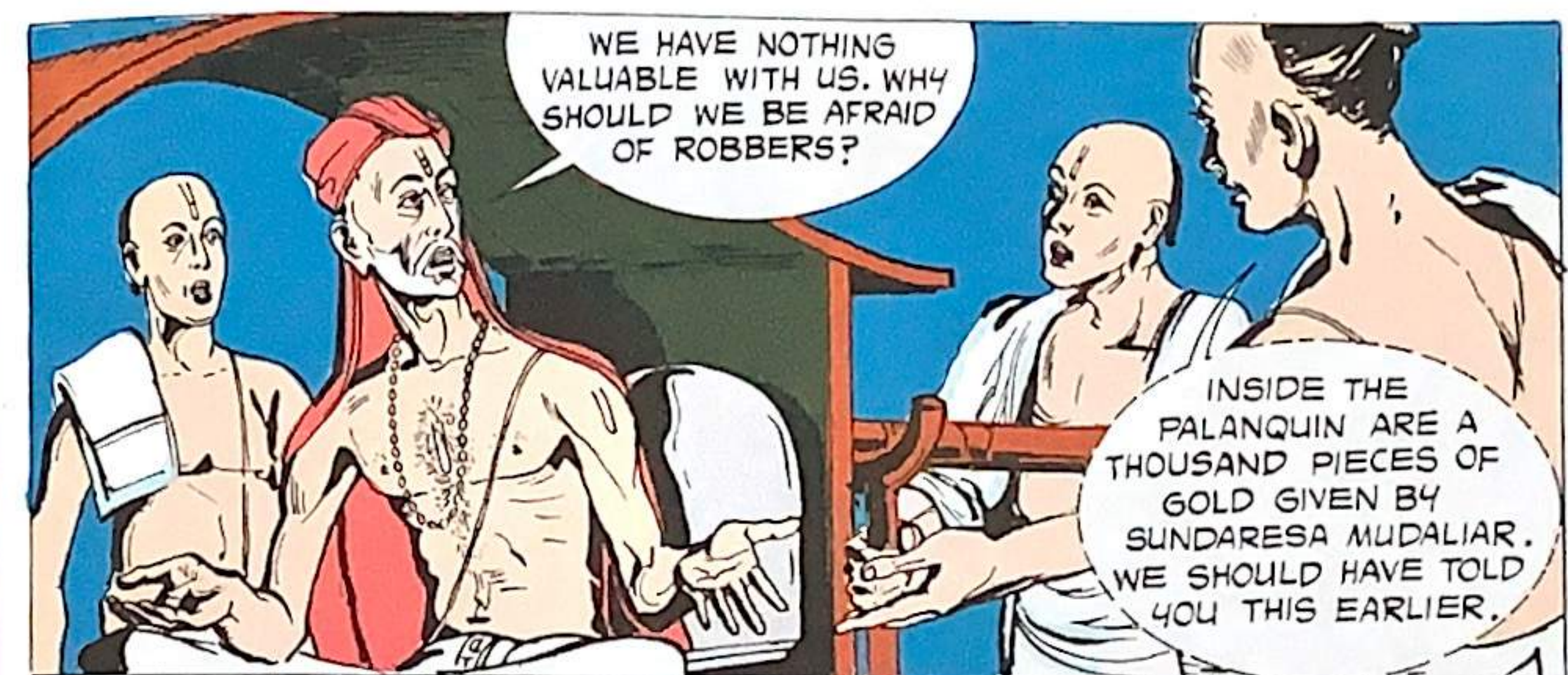
AT NIGHT THEY HAD TO PASS THROUGH A DENSE FOREST.



SUDDENLY STONES WERE HURLED AT THEM FROM ALL SIDES.

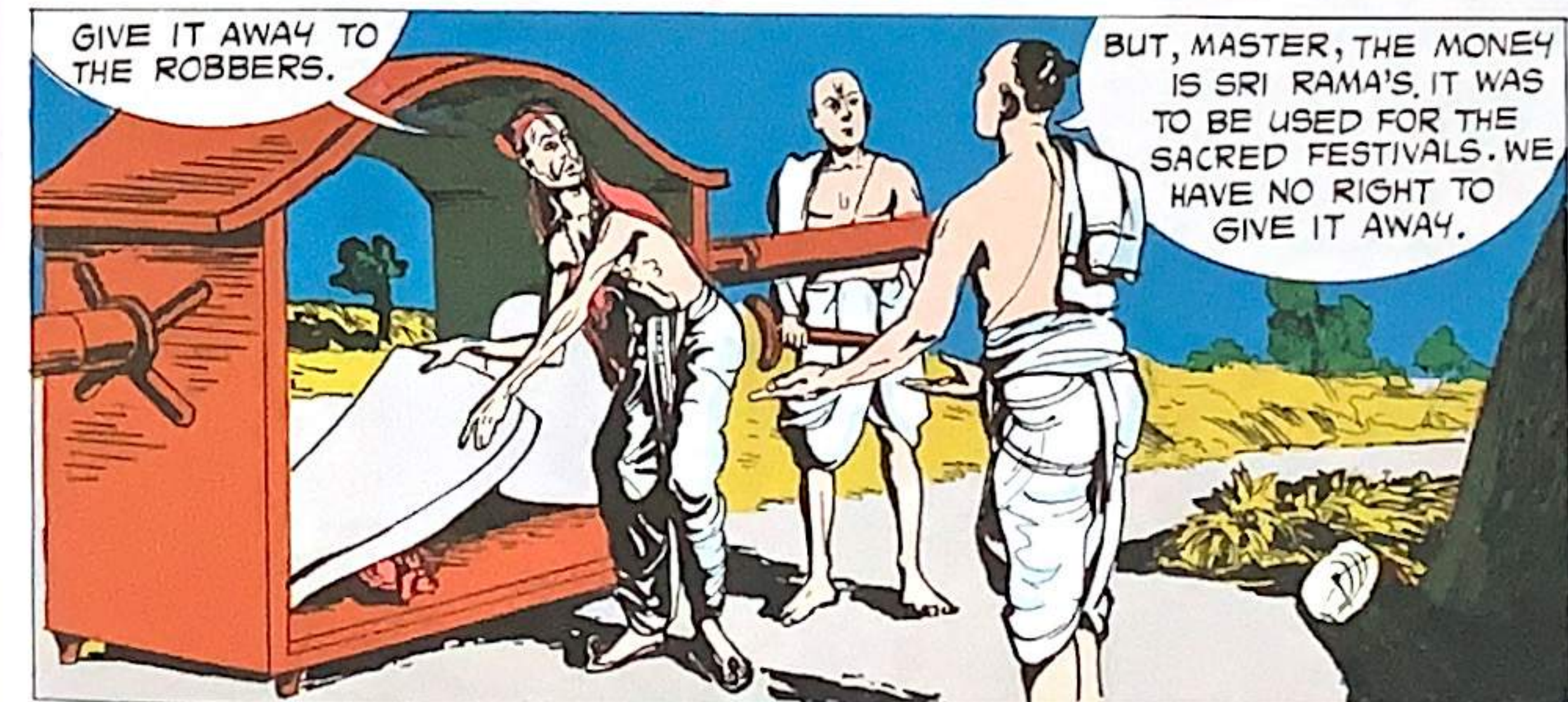
WHAT IS THIS?

ROBBERS! WE ARE BEING ATTACKED!



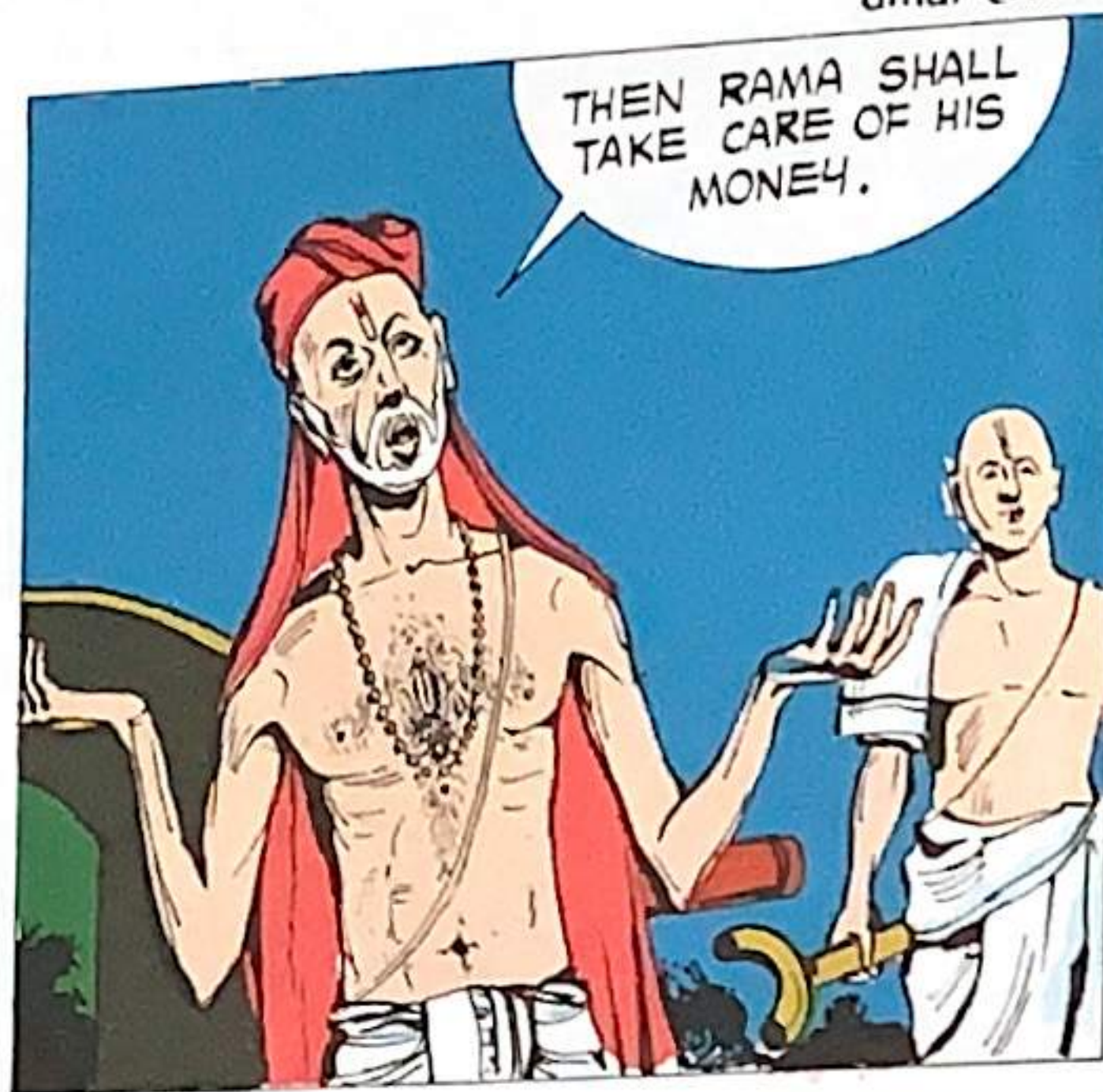
WE HAVE NOTHING VALUABLE WITH US. WHY SHOULD WE BE AFRAID OF ROBBERS?

INSIDE THE PALANQUIN ARE A THOUSAND PIECES OF GOLD GIVEN BY SUNDARESA MUDALIAR. WE SHOULD HAVE TOLD YOU THIS EARLIER.

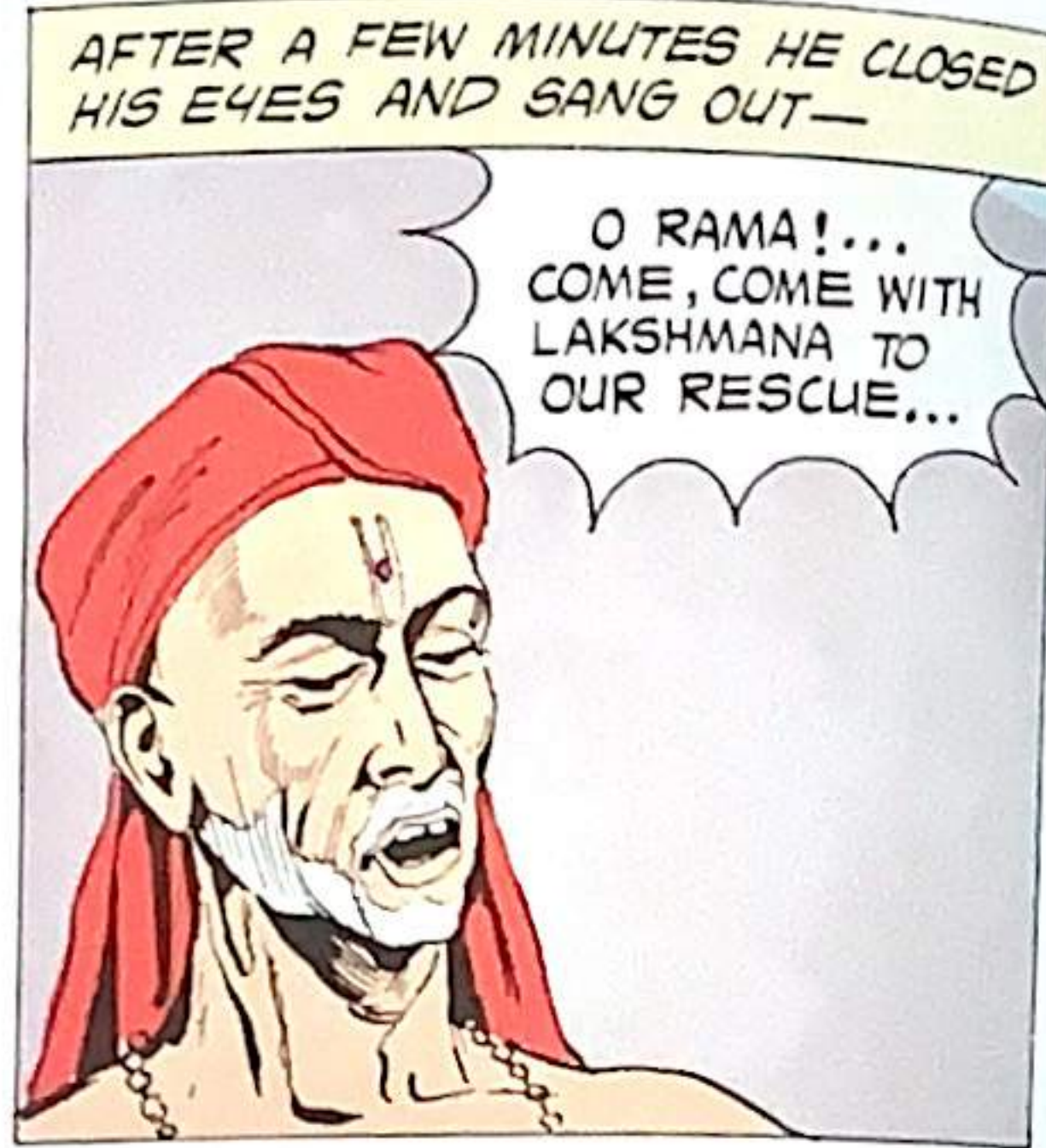


GIVE IT AWAY TO THE ROBBERS.

BUT, MASTER, THE MONEY IS SRI RAMA'S. IT WAS TO BE USED FOR THE SACRED FESTIVALS. WE HAVE NO RIGHT TO GIVE IT AWAY.



THEN RAMA SHALL TAKE CARE OF HIS MONEY.



AFTER A FEW MINUTES HE CLOSED HIS EYES AND SANG OUT—

O RAMA!...
COME, COME WITH
LAKSHMANA TO
OUR RESCUE...

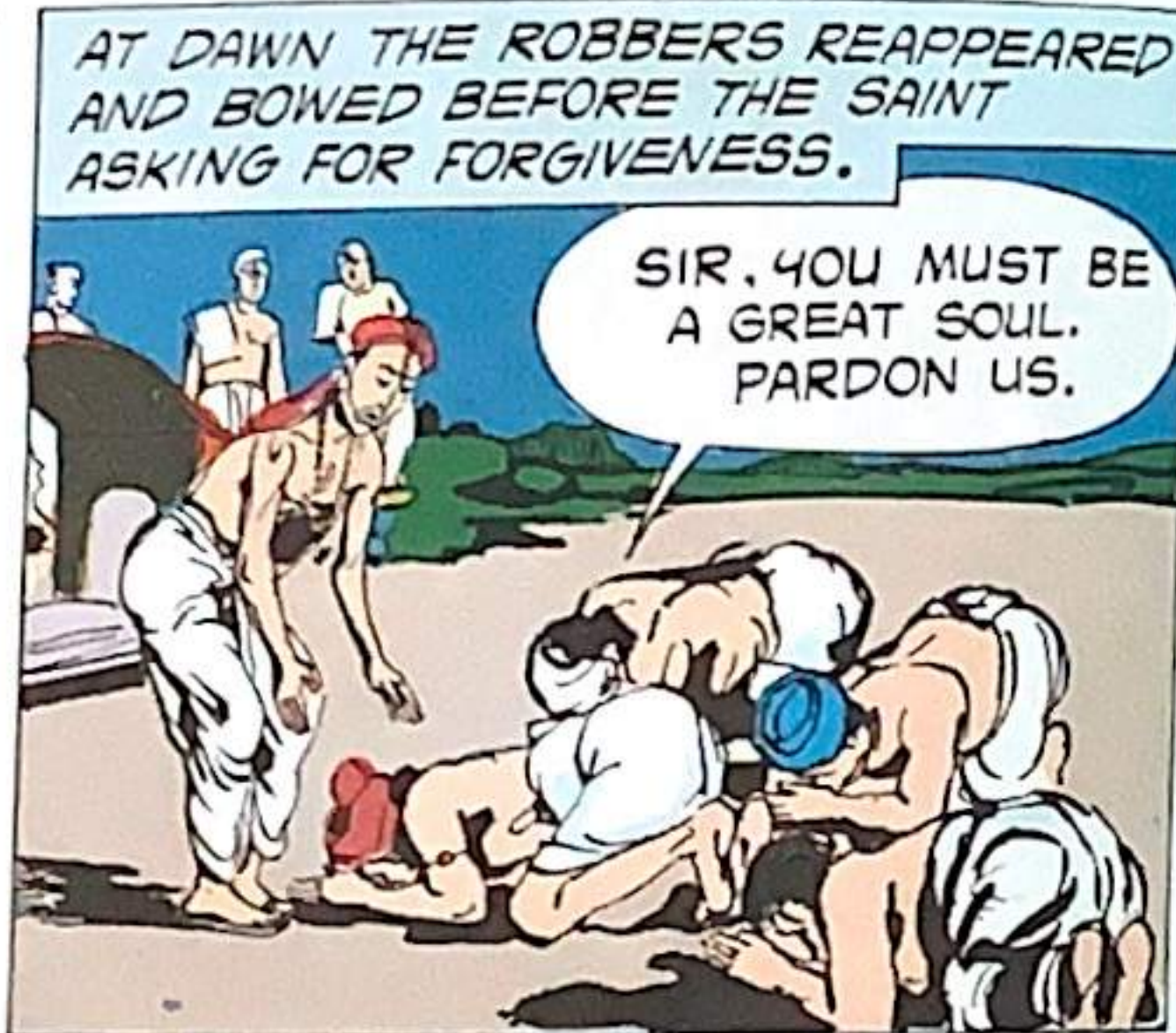


SUDDENLY—

AH, I AM
HURT.

AN ARROW!

RUN!

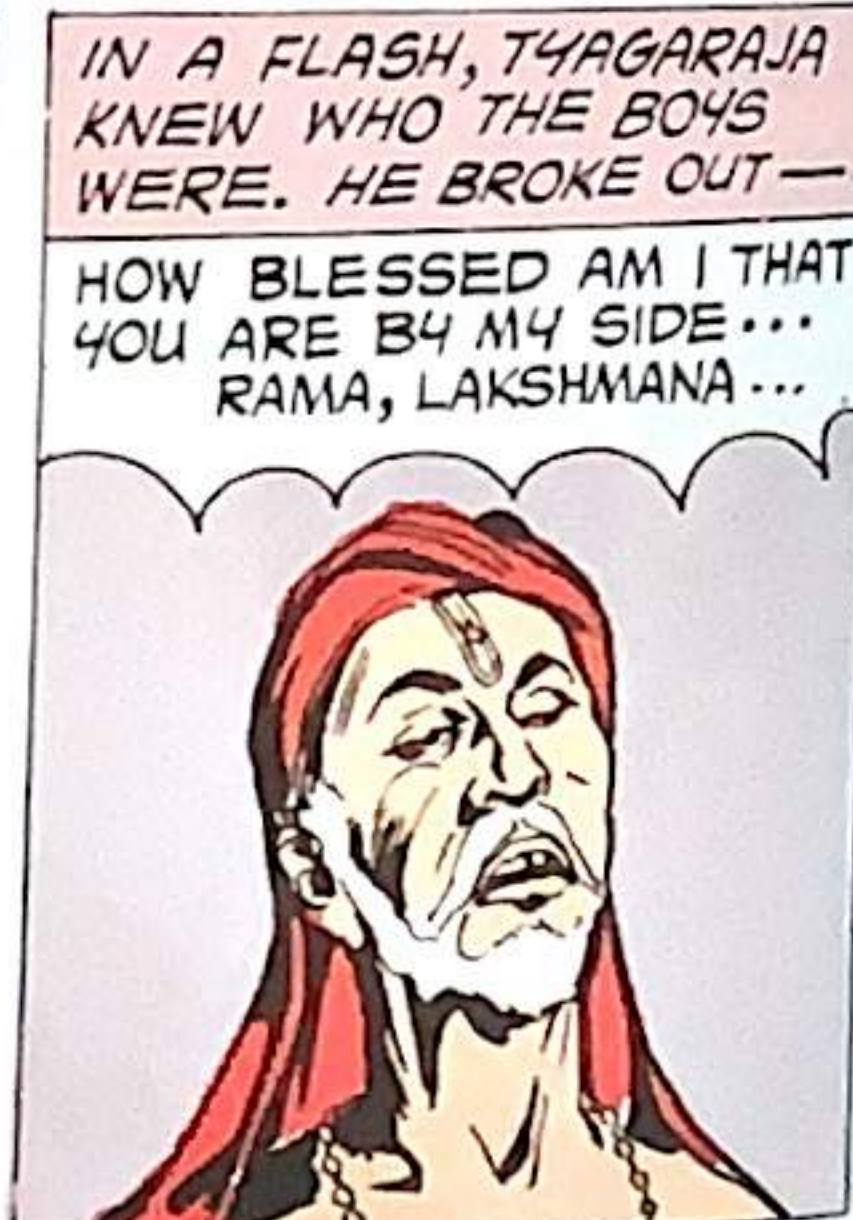


AT DAWN THE ROBBERS REAPPEARED AND BOWED BEFORE THE SAINT ASKING FOR FORGIVENESS.

SIR, YOU MUST BE
A GREAT SOUL.
PARDON US.

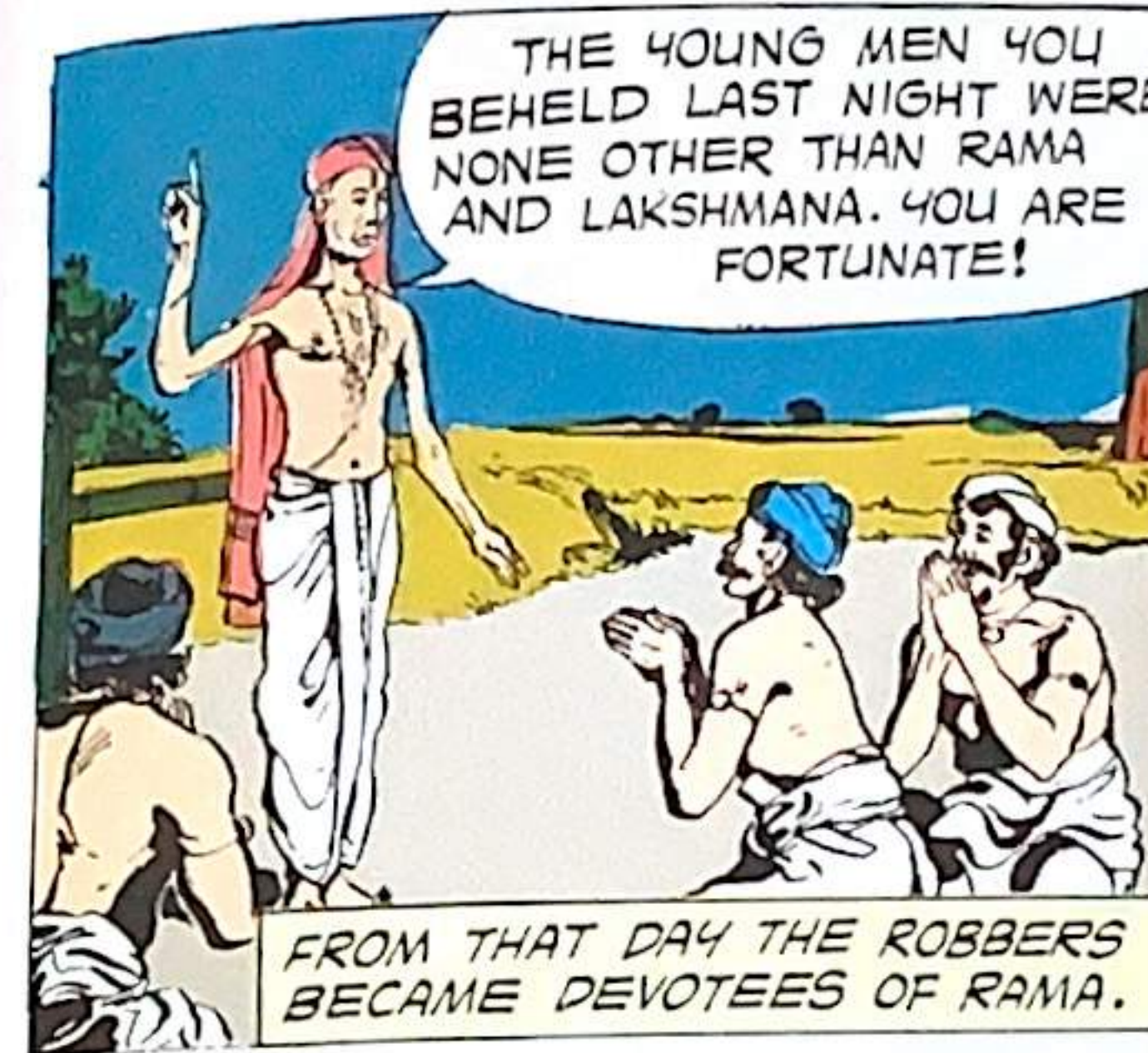


BUT TELL US, SIR, WHO WERE THE TWO STRONG BRAVE LADS WHO GUARDED YOUR PALANQUIN LAST NIGHT? WE HAD TO FLEE BEFORE THEM.



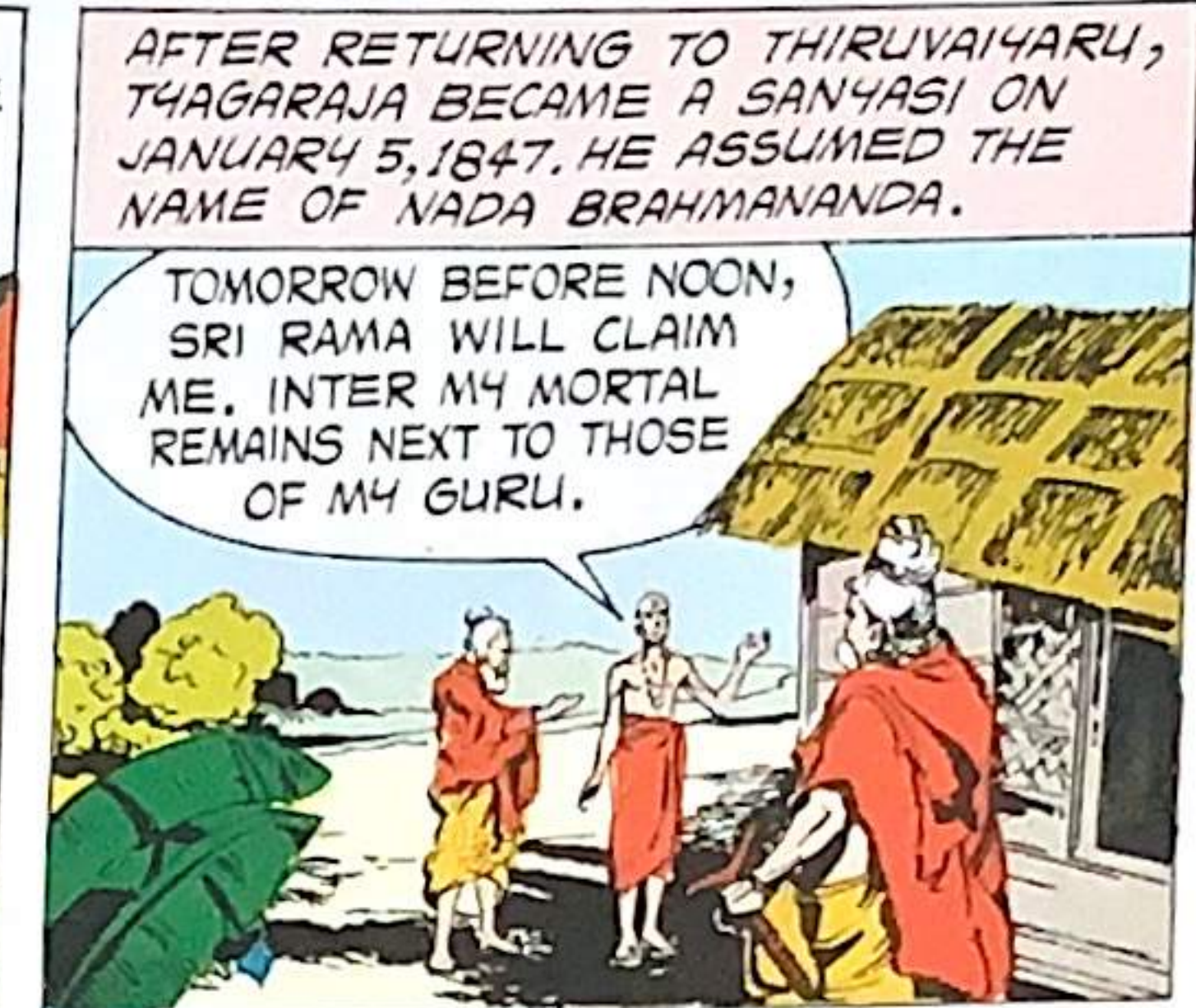
IN A FLASH, TYAGARAJA KNEW WHO THE BOYS WERE. HE BROKE OUT—

HOW BLESSED AM I THAT
YOU ARE BY MY SIDE...
RAMA, LAKSHMANA...



THE YOUNG MEN YOU BEHELD LAST NIGHT WERE NONE OTHER THAN RAMA AND LAKSHMANA. YOU ARE FORTUNATE!

FROM THAT DAY THE ROBBERS BECAME DEVOTEES OF RAMA.

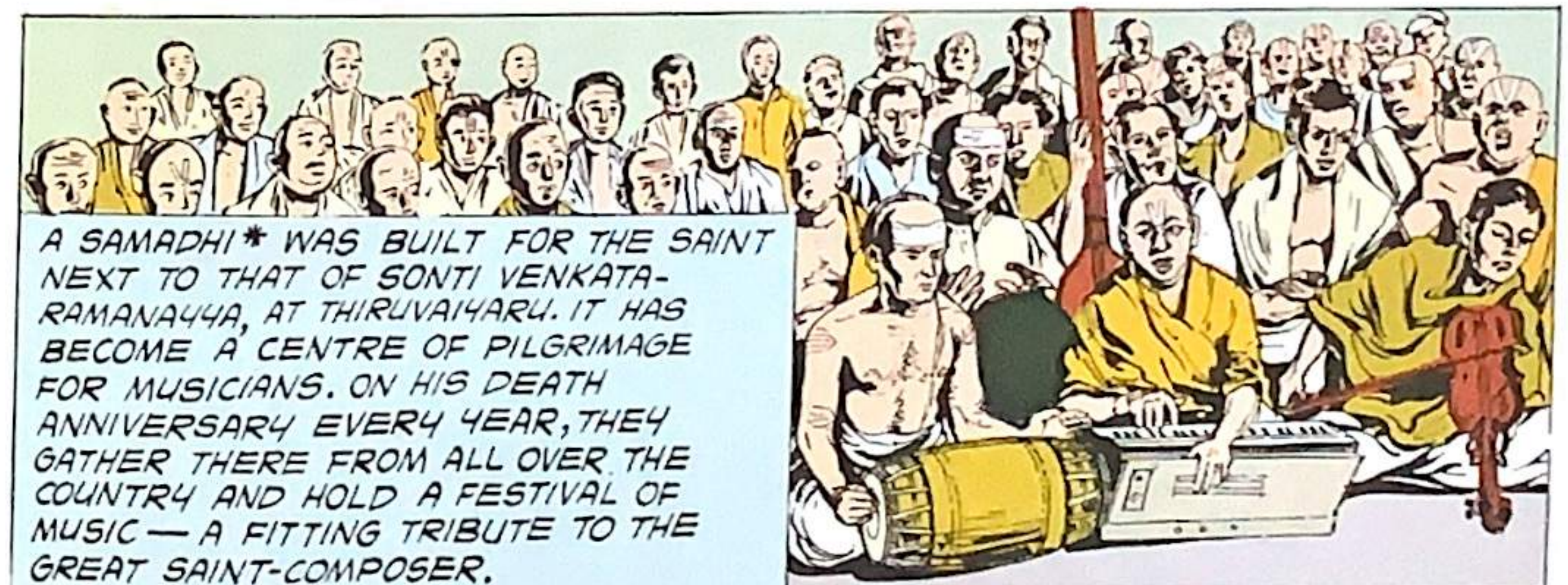


AFTER RETURNING TO THIRUVAIYARU, TYAGARAJA BECAME A SANYASI ON JANUARY 5, 1847. HE ASSUMED THE NAME OF NADA BRAHMANANDA.

TOMORROW BEFORE NOON, SRI RAMA WILL CLAIM ME. INTER MY MORTAL REMAINS NEXT TO THOSE OF MY GURU.



THE NEXT DAY, SURROUNDED BY HIS DISCIPLES, TYAGARAJA BEGAN SINGING THE GLORY OF RAMA AND AT 11:00 A.M. WAS RELEASED FROM HIS MORTAL FRAME.



A SAMADHI* WAS BUILT FOR THE SAINT NEXT TO THAT OF SONTI VENKATA-RAMANAYYA, AT THIRUVAIYARU. IT HAS BECOME A CENTRE OF PILGRIMAGE FOR MUSICIANS. ON HIS DEATH ANNIVERSARY EVERY YEAR, THEY GATHER THERE FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY AND HOLD A FESTIVAL OF MUSIC — A FITTING TRIBUTE TO THE GREAT SAINT-COMPOSER.

* HINDUS CREMATE THEIR DEAD, BUT THE BODIES OF SANYASIS ARE ENTOMBED. 31